
Report to West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board

25 April 2024

Updated Terms of Reference for Sussex Health & Care Assembly

Report by: Stephen Lightfoot, Chair of NHS Sussex

Summary

This report summarises the proposed changes to the Terms of Reference and membership of the Sussex Health & Care Assembly, including the appointment of an Independent Chair, after the first annual review of its governance arrangements since establishment in 2022. West Sussex County Council needs to formally approve these Terms of Reference as one of the four statutory members of this Joint Committee and this report has been provided to keep the West Sussex Health & Wellbeing Board informed of the proposed changes.

Recommendation to the Board

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to;

- (1) Note the updated Terms of Reference for the Sussex Health & Care Assembly.
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Relevance to [Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#)

The West Sussex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy is an important building block in the development of the Sussex Integrated Care Strategy, *Improving Lives Together*, which is approved and overseen by the Sussex Health & Care Assembly.

1 Background and context

- 1.1 The Sussex Health & Care Assembly is the statutory Joint Committee of Brighton & Hove City Council, East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council and the NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board, which was set up to meet the Health & Care Act 2022 requirement for each health and care system in England to establish an Integrated Care Partnership.
- 1.2 On its establishment in autumn 2022, the four statutory partners of the Assembly agreed that Stephen Lightfoot, Chair of NHS Sussex, would chair the Assembly and he made a commitment to review the effectiveness and governance arrangements of the Assembly at the end of its first year. This led to the Assembly members holding a workshop on 11 October 2023 and a series of virtual calls between October 2023 and January 2024 to develop and reach consensus on how the effectiveness of the Assembly could be further strengthened to achieve its core purpose.

- 1.3 There was considerable support from the Assembly for retaining a wide range of members from different sectors to reinforce that our system involves more than the NHS and social care partners. It was also recognised that the Assembly has strengthened partnership working across our system and had a fundamental role in approving the *Improving Lives Together* integrated care strategy.
- 1.4 There was an acknowledgement that the Assembly could be perceived as an 'NHS committee' rather than a broader 'system-wide committee' because it is currently chaired by the NHS Sussex Chair, has a large proportion of NHS members and most agenda items are led by NHS leaders (albeit with the support of other Assembly members).
- 1.5 There was an ambition to ensure that the Assembly has a clear ongoing role which is greater than the sum of its component parts and does not duplicate the responsibilities of its statutory partners or their existing governance arrangements.
- 1.6 There was a strong consensus that an Independent Chair should be appointed to chair the Assembly, provided they are well supported and resourced to do the job effectively. This approach is fully supported by the existing Chair of the Assembly.
- 1.7 An analysis of the five other integrated care systems in England which have 3 upper tier and/or combined local authorities like Sussex found that there was no common or consistent approach to the membership of their Integrated Care Partnerships (ICP). In fact, the total memberships ranged from 18 in the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland ICP to 51 in the Mid & South Essex ICP. It should also be noted that the Dorset ICP has an Independent Chair.

2 Proposal details

- 2.1 The purpose of the Assembly remains unchanged in the Terms of Reference:

'To support and promote greater integration and collaboration across health and social care at a strategic, Sussex-wide level. It will build upon the local Health and Wellbeing Strategies and co-ordinate the strategic direction for meeting the broader health, public health and social care needs of the population of Sussex to settle an Integrated Care Strategy for Sussex. It will undertake any other activities agreed by NHS Sussex and the three Local Authorities to help address the wider determinants of health and wellbeing and greater health equality at a strategic level. Its work will build upon and be informed by work at place level in Brighton & Hove, East Sussex and West Sussex, including through the local Joint Strategic Needs Assessments.'

- 2.2 An Independent Chair and secretariat will be appointed by the four statutory partners (i.e. Brighton & Hove City Council, East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council and NHS Sussex). A competitive process will be used to, recruit and select, with unanimous support, an Independent Chair. The Independent Chair will be employed by East Sussex County Council in this specific role on behalf of the Assembly. The four statutory partners will make equal contributions towards the cost of the Chair and the Assembly on a full cost recovery basis and managed through a Service Level Agreement. The Independent Chair will be responsible for agreeing the Assembly dates, venues and agendas with the four statutory partners in advance of the meetings.

2.3 The Assembly membership will be reduced from 24 to 18 Members and will be rebalanced to reflect the wider core determinants of health as follows:

Sector	Proposed Assembly Membership	Comment
Independent Chair	Independent Chair	New Chair
Statutory Partners	Chair of Brighton & Hove Health & Wellbeing Board	Existing Member
	Chair of East Sussex Health & Wellbeing Board	Existing Member
	Chair of West Sussex Health & Wellbeing Board	Existing Member
	Chair of NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board	Existing Member
Education	Further Education	Existing Member
	Higher Education	Reduce from 3 to 1 Member
Employment	Sussex Chamber of Commerce	Existing Member
Built Environment	Housing	Existing Member
Physical Activity	Sport and Leisure Provider	New Member
Healthcare	Chief Delivery & Strategy Officer of NHS Sussex	Existing Member
	General Practitioner Member	Existing Member
VCSE	Brighton & Hove VCSE Alliance Representative	Existing Member
	East Sussex VCSE Alliance Representative	Existing Member
	West Sussex VCSE Alliance Representative	Existing Member
Voice of the Public	Healthwatch Brighton & Hove	Existing Member
	Healthwatch East Sussex	Existing Member
	Healthwatch West Sussex	Existing Member

2.4 This means that two new members of the Assembly will be appointed (i.e. the Independent Chair and a Leisure Provider), whilst six of the existing NHS Sussex Members will stand down from the Assembly (i.e. Chief Executive Officer, Chief Medical Officer, Chief Nursing Officer and 3 Executive Managing Directors) and the number of Higher Education Members will be reduced from three to one (with 3 University Vice Chancellors rotating their attendance at each meeting).

2.5 Subject matter experts will continue to be invited to attend and participate in specific agenda items at Assembly meetings, with the agreement of the Independent Chair and the four statutory partners.

- 2.6 The number of Assembly meetings held in Public will remain at three per year and the frequency will be kept under review to ensure that the Assembly meets often enough to achieve its purpose.
- 2.7 NHS Sussex will continue to publish the agendas, papers and recordings of Assembly meetings on the Sussex Health & Care website.

3 Consultation, engagement and advice

- 3.1 These updated Terms of Reference now need to be approved by each of the four statutory partners before they can be implemented. The Leader and Lead Member for Strategic Management & Economic Development of East Sussex County Council approved them on 16 February 2024 and the NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board approved them at its Board Meeting held in Public on 27 March 2024. Brighton & Hove City Council will be making its decision at a Full Council Meeting on 16 May 2024.
- 3.2 The Sussex Health & Care Assembly also endorsed these updated Terms of Reference at its meeting in public on 10 April 2024.
- 3.3 Councillor Lanzer has confirmed that he can approve these updated Terms of Reference as a Cabinet Member for West Sussex County Council and this paper has been written to keep the West Sussex Health & Wellbeing Board informed on the development of the Sussex Health & Care Assembly.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Updated Terms of Reference of Sussex Health & Care Assembly