

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

15 JANUARY 2026

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (CORPORATE POLICY & SUPPORT)

A.3 ESSEX INTEGRATED CARE BOARD (ICB) CHIEF EXECUTIVE DESIGNATE ATTENDANCE AT THE COMMITTEE MEETING

PURPOSE OF THE INQUIRY

The Essex Integrated Care Board (ICB) will formally come into being on 1 April 2026. The Chief Executive Designate (Tom Abell) of the Essex Integrated Care Board (ICB) has been invited to attend the Committee's meeting. His presence will provide members of the Committee with the opportunity to make enquiries, seek clarification, and engage directly on matters relating to local health and care priorities.

SCOPE - THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE INQUIRY

To enable the Committee to undertake appropriate questioning of the Chief Executive of Essex ICB and, following its deliberations, to determine and record any recommendations it considers necessary.

INVITEES

Tom Abell – Chief Executive of Mid and South Essex Integrated Care System and the Chair Designate of the proposed Essex ICB from 1 April 2026

Portfolio Holder for Partnerships

BACKGROUND

The Chief Executive Designate of the Essex Integrated Care Board, which is to be formed with effect from 1 April 2026, has been invited to attend the meeting to aid his understanding of the key issues in our District and how we can work together as the new ICB develops to effectively support our residents. This will include a focus on what matters to residents and how we can deliver improvements in relation to their health and the opportunity to work together around the drivers of poor health outcomes such as housing and employment opportunity so as to deliver a truly preventative approach to poor health.

RELEVANT CORPORATE PLAN THEME/ANNUAL CABINET PRIORITY

- Pride in our area and services to residents
- Working with Partners to improve quality of life

DESIRED OUTCOME OF THE CONSIDERATION OF THIS INQUIRY

To enable the Committee to undertake appropriate questioning of the Chief Executive of proposed new Essex ICB and, following its deliberations, to determine and record any recommendations it considers necessary.

DETAILED INFORMATION

Delivery

On 30 September 2025, NHS Mid and South Essex published the following text as part of a news article detailing appointment of the Chief Executive of the new Essex Integrated Care Board:

“Local healthcare leader Tom Abell has been appointed as Chief Executive Designate of the new Essex Integrated Care Board (ICB) cluster.

The formation of a new Essex ICB cluster will see a single body responsible for the strategic commissioning of NHS services for the county.

I am delighted to be taking on the leadership of the new Essex ICB at this pivotal time. This development presents a unique opportunity for Essex to shape a truly local and practical approach to integrated care—one that reflects the needs and aspirations of the communities we serve. From my experience in working with partners across our healthcare system and beyond, I know that our ability to make a meaningful difference depends on the strength of our partnerships. As we move forward, deepening these relationships will be central to how we work.” – Tom Abell, speaking on his announcement.

The new Essex ICB cluster will operate in shadow form in the coming months and will formally replace the current three ICBs which cover Essex from 1 April 2026.

“I’m delighted to confirm the appointment of Tom Abell as Chief Executive. He brings a wealth of experience of health service leadership to the benefit of patients across the ICB area and wider region. This appointment will play a pivotal role in helping us deliver the bold and ambitious 10 Year Health Plan here in the East of England.” - Clare Panniker, regional director for NHS England in the East of England.

The development of a single ICB for Essex follows national policy direction. The change will simplify care commissioning and delivery across the county, enabling a sharper focus on prevention, early intervention, and reducing health inequalities.

Building on existing place-based partnerships will be key to achieving these goals and ensuring that services are designed around the needs of local people.

Tom Abell, who has served as Chief Executive of NHS Mid and South Essex for the past year, brings a deep understanding of the value of strong, collaborative relationships across the NHS, local government, the voluntary sector, and other partners. Under his leadership, the new Essex ICB will focus on strengthening these connections to improve health outcomes and reduce inequalities.”

Impact on the public

The reorganisation of the Integrated Care Board (ICB) is intended to strengthen the coordination and delivery of health and care services across Essex. For the local public, this means a clearer structure for decision-making, improved accountability, and a more consistent approach to addressing community health needs. By streamlining governance and enhancing collaboration with local authorities and partners, the reorganised ICB aims to ensure that services are more responsive, equitable, and better aligned to the priorities of residents.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee determines whether it has any comments or recommendations it wishes to put forward to the relevant Portfolio Holder or Cabinet.

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PREVIOUS RELEVANT DECISIONS

N/A

BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PUBLISHED REFERENCE MATERIAL

<u>NHS England » Implementing integrated care board mergers and boundary changes to take effect in April 2026 and 2027</u>
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APPENDICES

None

REPORT/INQUIRY CONTACT OFFICER(S)
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