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**HEALTH AND WELL BEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
ANNUAL REPORT 2007/08**

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**Introduction**

1. After another extremely busy year, I am delighted to present the Annual Report of Health and Well Being Scrutiny Committee to Council on behalf of Members of that Committee. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Members for their contribution to the work of this Committee, with particular thanks to those Members who participated in Scrutiny Reviews. Their support to the scrutiny process is invaluable and the work of the Committee would not have been as effective without their support and commitment over the last year. I also wish to acknowledge the effort and the help of the Officers in particular Miriam Davidson, Locality Director of Public Health, and Jane Robinson Assistant Director, Adult Services who have all taken on the role of Lead Officers for Health and Well Being Scrutiny and also thanks to Abbie Metcalfe, Democratic Support Officer. Special thanks are extended to the following Cabinet Members for their continued support - Councillors Bryan Thistlethwaite, Adult Services portfolio and Nick Wallis, Health and Leisure portfolio.
2. This year, the Committee has seen a change to its remit and name. The beginning of the year saw Social Affairs and Health Scrutiny Committee's remit include social services, housing services and social exclusion. Following the Council's decision to change the remits of the Scrutiny Committees, the Health and Well Being Committee now have the responsibility of scrutinising the following services: - adult social care, public health, environmental health, trading standards, registrars, leisure, culture and museums. While, the Committee has lost housing services, new service areas have been introduced and members have expressed a of great deal interest, to undertake further work in these areas.
3. Over the year, as seen in the appended work programme (**Appendix 1**), the Committee has handled all the elements of scrutiny, including policy development, progress, consultation and monitoring functions and studies of particular services. We have gained in experience and confidence using various techniques as appropriate.
4. As a Committee we continue to look at ways in which we can, through the Scrutiny process, contribute to the work of the Council and enable all our Members to analyse, contribute and comment on ways of developing the scrutiny process further.
5. This year saw the continuation of the Stroke Symptoms work, which has successfully resulted in the production of information cards to raise awareness of stroke symptoms in Darlington, in partnership with Darlington Soroptimists and Darlington PCT. The Scrutiny Committee would like to thank Councillors Marian Swift and Heather Scott for their continued work, which initially was anticipated to be a relatively short piece of work, but it has taken more time than originally envisaged, but has been well worth it. We have established firm relationships along the way with a local GP, Dr Fuat and entered into a new relationship with the Stroke Association.

6. In addition, the Committee has undertaken other reviews and contributed to a number of consultations. I would also like to thank link Officers other NHS Trust for their support and flexibility over the last year.
7. With the assistance of Officers the Committee has integrated the three key messages from the Annual Report of the Director for Public Health, into our Work Programme, which explains the reasons for the differences in health between Darlington residents and the rest of England, which are complex. They can be summarised as:- Inequalities in opportunity – poverty, family, education, employment and environment (the wider determinants of health), Inequalities in lifestyle choices – smoking, physical activity, food, drugs, alcohol and sexual activity; and Inequalities in access to service for those who are already ill or have accrued risk factors for disease. Inequalities have remained the focus of the Committees discussions and will continue to do so over the next year.

### **Improving relationships**

8. This year has seen the Committee continue to build on relationships with a variety of NHS Trusts, including establishing new relationships with NHS Direct and County Durham PCT. Lead Members hold regular briefings with Lead Directors of County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust and Darlington PCT Trust to discuss up and coming issues which affect residents of Darlington.
9. New Chief Executives have been appointed to the Acute Trust and Mental Health Trust and the Committee continues to improve our relations, through regular slots on the agenda, meetings and briefings. Stephen Eames, Chief Executive, County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust, is very keen to meet with Members and has already attended two scrutiny meetings and one briefing in his first four months with the Trust!
10. The Committee has been involved at early stages with consultations from the Trusts, demonstrating the good relationships established. In particular the access to primary medical care, local procurement for local health care consultation. Members of the Committee were presented with the information at the earliest opportunity, have involved local a GP in their work and will continue to monitor the PCT's progress through regular briefings.

### **More changes**

11. Since Stephen Eames has come into post, “Seizing the Future” has been launched, which is a programme of change aimed at developing the Trusts’ Strategic Direction for the next five years, which will be supported by a major clinical service review. This could impact greatly on Darlington and it’s residents and therefore, Committee has asked to be kept fully informed. The Trust has given an undertaking that Members will see the draft proposals before they are consulted upon.
12. Darlington PCT has seen a reconfiguration of staff and services over the last year and some changes have impacted our residents. Most recently, the changes to the GP out of hours services scheme has been launched and GP services are available at Dr Piper House from 6pm to 7am. Members are looking forward to receiving the findings of the pilot and how the service will be linked to the review of Urgent Care Services, which is also being

undertaken.

13. Members of the Committee have recently considered the Outline Strategy for Urgent Care Services, which is led by Officers from County Durham PCT. The document summarises the outcome of the stakeholder events, which clearly demonstrates the need to commission an urgent care service that is truly seamless and reflects the needs of patients and carers using the service. The key messages reflected through the Strategy is a single point of access to urgent care, transport of patients to and from services and the actual premises and the roles within. Members are keen that a single point of access should be at either the Dr Piper House or Darlington Memorial Hospital and a new building should not be built. It is envisaged that whatever the outcome of the Strategy, there will be an impact on Darlington residents and the Committee will continue to be kept informed.
14. The Tees, Esk and Wear Valley Trust have applied for Foundation Trust status and as a result the Committee has been briefed about the Trust's future Strategic Direction, Integrated Business Plan and Service. The Trust has undertaken the development of a number of service strategies in line with the overall Trust Strategy, which has been consolidated into the Integrated Business Plan covering the next five years. The Service Strategies cover Adult Mental Health, Older People, Learning Disabilities and Forensic Services, Children and Substance Misuse. Any service changes that are considered a significant service change will be consulted upon, although most are the services being realigned and reconfigured to be more effective in line with National Guidance.
15. The North East Ambulance Service Trust has been consulting the public around the local of the Contact Centres. Darlington Members on the Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Committee reported that the location of the Contact Centre would not impact in Darlington or the services delivered to its residents. Several Members of the Committee have visited the Ambulance Trust HQ and witnessed first hand how staff in the contact centre deal with 999 calls and despatch ambulances. Most recently following the Trust move to Bernicia House, Councillor Ian Haszeldine visited the brand new control room and was very impressed with what he saw.
16. From 1st April 2008, Members have seen the introduction of Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) replacing the Patient and Public Involvement Forums (PPI's). The Committee has received regular updates outlining how the Council was preparing itself for LINKs and procuring the host organisation. The Committee hopes that the LINKs will follow on from the successful working relationships with the four PPI's, which covered Darlington and look forward meeting the LINKs Members.

## **Monitoring**

17. We have received a number of reports monitoring work previously undertaken by the Committee such as the Committee's recommendations to make Darlington: A Breastfeeding Friendly Town. The finalised action plan was launched during the National Breastfeeding Awareness Week from 15th to 19th May, 2006. Members received an update from the Infant Feeding Co-Ordinator on the recommendations of the Breastfeeding Review and welcomed the positive progress of the Breast Feeding Accreditation Scheme and look forward to receiving further updates.
18. Following past work undertaken by the Committee in respect of teenage pregnancy and young parents and reducing health inequalities. Members were recently guided through a

report, which advised that there are 25% less young parents living in Darlington than in 1998, when the work commenced.

19. We have received an update on Home Equipment Loan Services following the work undertaken by the Committee in 2002. Members of the original Review Group were pleased to note the positive major changes in Home Equipment Loan Services (HELs). Members are keen to be kept informed in the progress in relation to HELs as there are further changes to be introduced that will impact on the Services.
20. In September 2006, the Committee received a revised version of the Smoke Free Darlington Action Plan following its development since our last joint meeting in September 2005. In relation to the Action Plan, Members of the Committee were pleased to receive an update from the Environmental Health Manager on the positive progress made since the introduction of the Smoking ban in July 2007. It was reported that there had been no prosecutions and on the whole the public had been quite receptive to the changes.
21. We have recently agreed to monitor the implementation of the Action Plan, which accompanies the new Darlington Borough Council Strategy for Improving Health. The new Strategy was presented to the Committee before it was considered by Cabinet and Members welcomed the opportunities to improve health over the next four years.
22. We also considered the draft Supporting People Commissioning Strategy jointly with Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Committee and agreed to jointly monitor the progress of the Strategy.
23. As part of our role we have continued to monitor the Service Plans under the control of Health and Well Being Scrutiny Committee, those being: - Adult Social Services, Leisure and Arts, Supporting People and Public Protection. Members received a summary of performance at the end of each quarter during the Municipal Year 2007/08, which clearly highlighted overall performance against targets and could still view all source data on *Performance Plus*. It is the intention of this Scrutiny Committee to set up Task and Finish Groups, as appropriate and necessary, in order to scrutinise performance in identified services and/or for individual performance indicators.

### **Assessment for Improvement – The Annual Health Check**

24. As part of performance management arrangements across the NHS, the Committee has again engaged in the self-assessment process for each local NHS Trust and has provided a ‘reality check’ on Trust performance across 24 core standards.
25. Again, the Committee has split into four separate groups and agreed some common standards in relation safety, accessible and responsive care, care environment and amenities, and public health to inform our contribution to each Trusts final declaration of compliance for 2007/08. Many successful meetings have been held, together with very useful visits to the North East Ambulance Trust HQ, Bernicia House, Pallion Fleet/Ambulance Station, West Park Hospital, Darlington Memorial Hospital and Dr Piper House.

### **Other Reviews**

26. At a Climate Change Event held on 5th July, 2007, to which all Scrutiny Committees were invited, areas for consideration by each Committee were considered to reduce the effects of

Climate Change. Following that event, all Scrutiny Committees were tasked with examining these areas further and their findings would feed into the Action Plan for the Darlington and Tees Valley Climate Change Strategies. Members of this Committee wished to give consideration to two areas: the food element of Eco Footprinting and education and raising awareness of Skin Cancer. Members split up into two Task and Finish Groups to undertake their work.

27. The Eco Footprinting Group met with Ken Ross, Public Health Specialist, Darlington PCT and agreed three recommendations which included that the Committee meet with Officers to discuss issues around locally sources food in Council owned buildings, adding incentives to the tender process to encourage local companies and suppliers to apply and that the Committee be kept informed of the Eco-footprinting work being undertaken by the PCT, at timely intervals.
28. The Skin Cancer Awareness Group met with Dr Mary Carr, Dermatology Consultant, County Durham & Darlington Foundation Trust and also agreed three recommendations, which included the production of an Action Plan to raise awareness and promote to risks of skin cancer and healthy sun exposure, that the Council works with the NHS to promote healthy sun exposure and risk of skin cancer within Darlington Schools and that further publicity be included in the Town Crier during the summer months to assist with raising awareness of skin cancer, while acknowledging there is also a need for health sun exposure, as a source of Vitamin D.
29. Both Groups recommendations were feed back to the Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee who are leading on this. It was recently presented to Cabinet and the recommendations will be integrated into the Action Plan for Darlington.
30. We have also undertaken a review in relation to the Older People's Strategy. All Members of the Committee were involved in meetings with Warren Tweed and Miriam Davidson during the drafting of the Strategy. The Committee recently considered the draft before it was submitted to Cabinet and agreed to monitor the progress of the Strategy and be involved with its consultation as Members felt that the original consultation of the initial draft was fairly limited.

### **Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Committee**

31. It has been a challenging year for the Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Committee, with many meetings being held. I would like to thank those Members on the Joint Scrutiny Committee for their attendance at the meetings of the Joint Scrutiny Committee. The Joint Committee has been particularly examining the change of location of the Contact Centre for the North East Ambulance Trust, as mentioned earlier in the report. The other Tees Valley Authorities have been against the proposals while Darlington are supportive having seen for themselves the control room in action.
32. The Joint Committee have established a Sub-Committee to consider Momentum: Pathways to Healthcare Statutory Consultation, which involves proposals to build a new hospital serving Hartlepool, Stockton, Easington and Sedgefield. Darlington has opted out of the Sub-Committee but will be kept informed of the process.
33. The Joint Committee have also considered national blood service, neurological conditions, and cancer screening across the Tees Valley. In addition, Members views have been sought

during the Foundation Trust Consultation for both Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS trust and South Tees NHS Trust. It's been a busy year!

### **Looking Ahead...**

34. We will continue to have regard to the health inequalities identified in our Work Programme in respect of opportunities, choice and access to improve equalities for Darlington residents.
35. We anticipate the outcome of Lord Darzi's Report both nationally and regionally, which is expected in the summer, which we know will impact on the all the Trusts that provide services to Darlington residents. We will also continue to look at ways in which scrutiny can contribute to the vision for Darlington.
36. In the new municipal year, the Committee will be busier than ever, as we will respond to the North East Ambulance Services Trust's consultation on its application to become a Foundation Trust, the outcomes of the seizing future review, the proposals resulting from the Urgent Care Consultation and Access to Primary Care. Members will also be embarking on a major review into alcohol and its impact on health services in the town resulting from the extended opening hours.

### **Health and Well Being Scrutiny Committee**