

HEALTH AND PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
12 March 2014

PRESENT – Councillor Newall (in the Chair); Councillors Donoghue, Francis Macnab, Regan, E. A Richmond, S. Richmond and H Scott. (8)

APOLOGIES – Councillors I. Haszeldine Nutt and J. Taylor. (3)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Kath Wall representing GOLD. (1)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Sharon Raine, Head of Organisational Planning, Peter Roberts, Consultant – Sustainable Community Strategy and Karen Graves, Democratic Officer.

EXTERNAL REPRESENTATIVES -

HP57. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY – Pursuant to Minute HP56/Feb/14, the Chief Executive submitted a report (previously circulated) together with Darlington's Sustainable Community Strategy (also previously circulated), One Darlington: Perfectly Placed, which it was proposed to revisit and refresh in light of the changed circumstances since its approval in 2008. A PowerPoint presentation accompanied the report.

The submitted report outlined the background to the approval of Darlington's Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS); the need, as a result of the Council's current financial position and the significant changes to the national economic situation to review the vision and the outcomes to ensure the Council and its partners continued to be focussed on key outcomes; and the processes involved in developing and approving a revised Strategy.

Members were invited to contribute to the revised SCS document and to consider how this Scrutiny Committee could contribute to the objectives to reduce inequality by ensuring Darlington has more people active and involved, more people healthy and independent and enough support for people when needed.

Particular reference was also made to the need to measure performance against the key objectives and priorities and how this would be achieved and it was reported that a revised performance development framework process was currently being developed and would be reported to Members in due course. It was anticipated that this new framework would assist Members in developing their work programmes over the next Municipal Year and would focus Members on ensuring any work undertaken would reflect the strategic aims of the Council.

Scrutiny then concentrated on the objectives within its remit and discussion ensued on inclusion of children on pupil premium within the data for the achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers achieving level 4 at KS2 in reading, writing and maths and quality of the data in relation to all-age all-cause mortality rate and the impact of the deprivation on that data.

Particular reference was made to generation of the data in relation to median earnings of full-time employees in the Borough as it was deemed that this was different to the good news stories contained in the Business Section of the Northern Echo. It was also considered that the Office for National Statistics found it difficult to obtain accurate information due to the way data was connected and how it was passed to the public. Scrutiny concurred that local issues needed to be understood against national issues and that current good news stories would have an impact on future indicators.

In relation to the percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting Committee were informed that Darlington was fourth best in the Country although still under 40 per cent.

Scrutiny then considered the Performance Management Framework and was advised that improvements to smaller indicators would have an impact on the larger indicators; the example being Swim for Life has an impact on Active Kids which impacts on Obesity in Children. Scrutiny was advised that Children were weighed in Reception and again in Year 6 and clinical terms and measurements were used to determine obesity. It was also reiterated that the Council needed to know what its partners were doing to deliver indicators i.e. Public Health on obesity and the Police on community safety.

Members were keen to ensure good support was received from all involved Partners and to ensure that schools were also involved. Members suggested that School Governors could play a role in ensuring involvement and it was confirmed that Organisational Planning were currently collating school data for analysis. Specific discussion centred on building strong relationships with residents and community groups as this would also help to deliver. It was also confirmed that work was on-going to determine how the data would be captured by all partners.

Members were pleased to learn that the Performance Management Framework would help to shape Scrutiny Work Programmes and Scrutiny would work more closely with the Organisational Planning Team to help capture the work of all partners involved in the re-drafting of the Strategy.

Scrutiny was willing to help the Organisational Planning Team by feeding into Community Partnerships and Residents' Associations and was advised that once the Strategy was agreed it could focus on where the work was required.

Committee were advised that data was being collected from Officers and external partners to identify needs and priorities; the Strategy was the overall plan for all partners and would be owned by the Darlington Partnership. It focussed on the realities of the current economic climate and the middle three lines of the vision summarised the Council's document. Each of the eight outcomes would have a full page with an overview, progress made, key issues and how they were to be addressed. There was also to be a section relating to cross-cutting outcomes.

The Chair highlighted that Scrutiny were currently involved in several pieces of work such as smoking cessation, healthy eating and alcohol-related issues which couldn't be taken in isolation. The exercise agenda was also important but not part of this

Scrutiny's remit although it had cross-cutting issues and it was important that all partners and Scrutiny Committees worked together.

Reference was made to the new model for Lifestyle Intervention and Improvement for Darlington based at the Dolphin Centre which contributed to the health of Darlington residents. Members were also advised investigations were on-going into the integrated commissioning of health and residents' views were being sought on how they were going to help achieve the outcomes i.e. keeping healthy.

A Member questioned how Teen Age Conception rate, which had been an issue for approximately 10 years, could be improved and was advised that delivery of the aspirations was key and it was possible that services needed to be focussed.

Committee emphasised that Darlington was a good place to live and it had more prosperity than the data suggested, the Economic Strategy was an excellent Strategy which encouraged people and new business to Darlington.

With regard to delivery of the Strategy it was confirmed that a behaviour and responsibility change would not occur overnight and that measures of improvement could be more community facilities and a shorter Hospital stay. It was agreed that the population was smoking less and living longer, especially women who had not been employed in manual jobs.

Life expectancy Indicators would not show an improvement for 10 to 15 years, one of the outcomes could be to encourage more GP visits which will have a small impact on the long-term goal of life expectancy.as ailments would be detected sooner.

Councillors advised they could be put information such as Cancer Screening on Ward Newsletters although residents could not be forced to attend Doctors. It was essential that good health was promoted and the linkage of Public Health and the Dolphin Centre was a way forward.

RESOLVED – (a) That the Officers be thanked for their informative presentation.

(b) That the views of this Scrutiny Committee be considered when formulating the draft Sustainable Community Strategy.

(c) That the re-drafted Sustainable Community Strategy be considered by this Scrutiny Committee at its next ordinary meeting scheduled for 15 April 2014.