
DARLINGTON: A BREASTFEEDING FRIENDLY TOWN

Responsible Cabinet Member(s) – Councillor John Williams, Leader

Responsible Director(s) – Corporate Management Team

Purpose of Report

1. To report the findings of the Social Affairs and Health Scrutiny Committee's action learning scrutiny project 'Darlington: A Breastfeeding Friendly Town'.

Information and Analysis

2. In November 2003, the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) was awarded £2.25 million from the Department of Health to run a three-year support programme to assist Councillors in their new powers to scrutinise health issues.
3. As part of this programme, all local authorities were invited to bid for funding to undertake an innovative action learning scrutiny project. Darlington was one of nine authorities in the country and the only one in the region to be successful in obtaining funding for year 1 to undertake a detailed review of the uptake and continuation of breastfeeding in Darlington.
4. It was envisaged that the successful projects would not only make recommendations to improve the health of local people but would also develop a new approach to health scrutiny locally and allow the lessons learned to be shared with other local authorities and health partners on both a local and national level.
5. The findings and recommendations of the project are detailed in the final report attached at **Appendix 1**. The recommendations are aimed specifically at the LSP, the Council and its partners, in order to achieve a co-ordinated programme across health, education, employment and the wider community. This is needed to create a cultural shift in attitudes towards breastfeeding.

Outcome of Consultation/Directors' Comments

6. At its meeting on 25th October 2005, the Social Affairs and Health Scrutiny Committee accepted and endorsed the project recommendations and agreed to circulate the final report to all those organisations affected by the recommendations for comment.
7. In particular, under the Committee's health scrutiny powers, all NHS bodies are required to respond within 28 days setting out the views of the Trust on the recommendations; proposed action in response to the recommendations; and any reasons for inaction in relation to the

recommendations made. The deadline for these responses is 25th November 2005 and the comments received will be circulated as additional information for this Cabinet meeting.

8. The Chair of the Review Group has also met individually with the Chief Executive and Directors of the Council and the Chief Executive of Darlington Partnership to discuss the implications of the report and recommendations and received positive feedback on the work of the Review.
9. In particular, the following comments have been received:
 - (a) Community Services -current proposals for refurbishment of the Dolphin Centre and Arts Centre will include proposals for breastfeeding as recommended in the final report. Management procedures for various offices within the directorate will also cover procedures for identifying any potential need for future breastfeeding arrangements, prior to staff taking maternity leave.
 - (b) Children's Services supports the findings and recommendations of the Review Group.

Legal Implications

10. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

11. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

Council Policy Framework

12. The issues contained within this report do not represent change to Council policy or the Council's policy framework

Decision Deadline

13. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter

Recommendations

14. It is recommended that :
 - (a) the approval of Cabinet be given to:

- (i) the strategic co-ordination and leadership on this issue being led by the Local Strategic Partnership through the Health Improvement and Social Inclusion Themed Group;
- (ii) the development of a Borough-wide Breastfeeding Strategy;
- (iii) the introduction of a recognised local Breastfeeding Friendly Accreditation Scheme
- (iv) the implementation of those recommendations which are specific to the Council as detailed below:

RECOMMENDATION 2

All public sector organisations should build on the policy, guidelines and practice introduced by Sure Start Wave 3, to minimise subliminal messages.

TIMESCALE: Within the financial year 2005/06.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Breastfeeding should be included as one of the key messages for young people as part of the health education and healthy eating aspect of the school curriculum and that the Children's Services Department should lead on this issue in conjunction with its key partners.

TIMESCALE: To be identified through the development of the Darlington Breastfeeding Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION 10

That the issue of breastfeeding be addressed more proactively in the workplace and formalised through dissemination of information to employees on the opportunities to breastfeed or express milk on returning to work and that individual issues be discussed further through return to work interviews with staff. The public sector should lead by example.

TIMESCALE: To be identified through the development of the Darlington Breastfeeding Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION 13

Following an audit of all Darlington Borough Council buildings, appropriate action plans be developed to ensure that a consistent standard of facilities for breastfeeding women is provided, based on a recognised checklist.

TIMESCALE: Within the financial year 2005/06.

RECOMMENDATION 15

That there is much potential to strengthen the breastfeeding facilities aspect of the Council's planning policy and Planning Officers should strengthen the guidelines in this area through the Local Development Framework.

TIMESCALE: That the provision of breastfeeding facilities be addressed through the revisions to detailed development control policies, which are due to be submitted to the Secretary of State in December 2008.

- (b) The comments of Cabinet in respect of this project be referred back to the Social Affairs and Health Scrutiny Committee.

Reasons

15. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons :

- (a) The need for a clear champion for the Darlington's 'breastfeeding friendly town' initiative to be located where maximum influence can be exerted at all levels across all sectors.
- (b) The need for a co-ordinated approach across health, education employment and the wider community.
- (c) To obtain the support of businesses and improve facilities in the Town Centre.
- (d) To enable the Council to lead by example in the provision of accessible and comfortable facilities for nursing staff and customers.
- (e) To enable the views of Cabinet to be sought and fed back to the Social Affairs and Health Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor John Williams, Leader

Background Papers

There were no background papers used in the preparation of this covering report. Further details of the documents used to inform the recommendations can be found in the final report attached at **Appendix 1**.

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