
OVERVIEW OF HEALTH AND PARTNERSHIPS PORTFOLIO

Purpose of the Report

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the main areas of work under my Health and Partnerships Portfolio were as follows:

Healthy Darlington

2. The Healthy Darlington Themed group met on 3rd October 2011. The agenda reflected the diverse range of issues that the Theme's group covers. The draft Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for Darlington was considered and endorsed by the Healthy Darlington group as an important plan to prevent obesity and promote a healthy weight.
3. The Local Sustainable Transport Fund Project complements the Physical Activity Strategy and will promote health in its wider work. NHS County Durham and Darlington are partners with Darlington Borough Council in the project and the Healthy Darlington themed group members keenly supported the plans.
4. Planning continues for the move to local authorities of a range of public health responsibilities from April 2013. A detailed Public Health Transition Plan is being developed with key partners. Briefings on the changes to public health will continue to be offered for elected members.
5. FRESH and the British Lung Foundation have joined forces to run a campaign "Every Breath" advert which shows the progression of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). The campaign delivers the message that smoking kills and signposts to NHS Stop Smoking services.
6. On 18th October I attended the NHS County Durham and Darlington Obesity Conference. The conference featured a presentation on the 'Change 4 Life' campaign. Organisations were informed that the campaign and marketing material is available for all to adopt.
7. As part of Alcohol Awareness Week commencing on 14 November, Professor Sir Ian Gilmore a former president of the Royal College of Physicians hosted a roundtable meeting in Newcastle on the affordability of alcohol. Representatives were invited from all North East councils. I attended on behalf of the council. The purpose of the meeting was to address the affordability of alcohol in relation to health and discuss a potential package of measures relating to the availability and the promotion of alcohol. Also that any local action to address affordability would need to be coordinated regionally.

Joint Health and Social Care Public Event

8. On 27th September 2011 a joint public event was held at Central Hall, Dolphin Centre between the local authority and the Shadow Clinical Commissioning Group. The event

included presentations from the Director of Public Health who outlined Darlington's Health Profile and Public Health challenges and Shadow Joint Chair of the Clinical Commissioning Group, Harry Byrne regarding Clinical Commissioning Groups. The event was very well attended with approximately 90 people in attendance. It included table based discussions which captured how the public could influence future public and patient involvement for Health and Social Care in Darlington. More information about the event and the presentations from the session are available at the following link:

<http://www.darlington.gov.uk/Living/Communities/talkingtogether/Health+and+Social+Care.htm>

Evaluation of Opportunities re Integrated Commissioning

9. A stakeholder event was held on 4th October 2011 to explore potential for developing integrated commissioning arrangements between the local authority and the shadow clinical commissioning group. Delegates at the event explored the benefits of integrated commissioning for the Darlington population and discussed barriers and opportunities. The event was opened by Ada Burns, Chief Executive and Harry Byrne, Joint Chair of the Shadow Clinical Commissioning Group. Delegates at the event included a number of LINK members, local authority officers, PCT leads, elected members and staff representing eight general practitioner surgeries which comprised of six General Practitioners, five Practice Managers and the CCG Board Practice Nurse representative. A 'proof of concept' report will be presented to the formative Health and Well-being Board on 8th November 2011 which will capture recommendations from the stakeholder event and from additional research that has taken place with key stakeholders between July and October 2011.

HealthWatch

10. A specification for the tendering of a local HealthWatch service is being developed and a project team is supporting this work which will require a European tender exercise. There are a number of key differences between the existing Local Involvement Networks (LINK) and HealthWatch: rather than simply influencing the development of local services, as LINK do now, HealthWatch will have a seat on the Health and Well-being Board that will develop a health and well-being strategy and commissioning priorities for the implementation of this strategy.
 - (a) HealthWatch provide information for individuals to make choices about access to services and this will not only include adult services but also children's services.
 - (b) HealthWatch will be responsible for signposting or directly delivering an advocacy role for supporting individuals including those who need to make a complaint. It is important that the specification includes safeguards to set robust standards for the advocacy role which requires fully trained staff/volunteers to undertake it safely.
11. The funding for carrying out this work is currently subject to consultation and it is not therefore possible to finalise the tender specification at this stage. Discussions are also ongoing with neighbouring authorities on jointly commissioning the advocacy element of the contract.

Improving Health: Task and Finish Group Report

12. I have participated in a rapid, time-limited, in-depth, non-bureaucratic look at councils' roles in improving health. This is a key issue facing all councils. The task and finish group was facilitated by the Association of North East Councils. We have published a final report

and a summary list of twenty-four recommendations under four key headings:-

- (a) Key public health challenges
- (b) Making the new structures work effectively
- (c) “Must dos” (and “must don’ts”)
- (d) Opportunities for political leadership

Equalities and Engagement

- 13. To help the Council meet its duty to involve local people in carrying out its functions, a programme of public consultation has been developed. It includes an engagement programme to inform the development of equalities impact assessments of budget proposals. One of the key channels of engagement will be public events. Talking Together events will run during December and January and will include targeted consultation with older people, younger people and disabled people.

Darlington Together

- 14. Fourteen volunteers have been recruited to develop an action plan for Red Hall in relation to waste, recycling and litter. The aim of this project is to reduce the demand on council services for activity such as fly tipping by engaging with the community to look at prevention activity. A community worker is working alongside colleagues in Street Scene. Several local businesses are supporting the litter project in Red Hall, enabling the awareness-raising side of the work to have a higher profile.
- 15. Work is now progressing well in Skerne Park to bring all parties within the community together to form a local panel to distribute Community First funding. Skerne Park is the only area eligible for this government funding and it is a minimum of £16,995 over four years. This panel will consist of:
 - (a) four to eight local residents including councillors.
 - (b) have a lead voluntary sector partner who will oversee the distribution of grants of between £250 and £2,500 to community groups in the neighbourhood.
- 16. The Lascelles and Eastbourne Link project has now been completed. The launch event took place on 8th October to finalise work on the Open Spaces community project across both ward areas. This has improved the lighting and paths in the local parks and also brought together local schools and the two Community Partnerships of Bank Top and Lascelles on a joint project that will benefit families in both communities.
- 17. A Councillor training session has been held where members have been able to question each other about how they are progressing community involvement in their own wards.

Welfare Rights

- 18. Forty-nine new enquiries were opened during September and 72 enquiries were closed. These include both complex and one-off enquiries. In addition, five enquiries were dealt with as anonymous enquiries or consultancy for local authority or voluntary agency staff. At the end of September the total caseload for the team was 169 cases.
- 19. During October, £124,126 [£71,912 last October] in additional benefits was secured for clients. The total for the year to date is £608,189.

20. The Community Advice Partnership Take-Up Officer has run two campaigns targeting older people. The first was in partnership with Anchor Housing; the second one has concentrated on owner-occupiers, who are particularly likely to be under-claiming benefits, and has been in partnership with Lifeline. Over £134,000 (of the £608,189 total given above) in additional benefits has been claimed to date. A new campaign started in August targeted at disabled children whose families/carers may not be aware of their right to welfare payments.

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Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Health and Partnerships