

---

**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. With the proposed changes to the Darlington Partnership structures, members of the Themed Group have been feeding into discussions and events to inform the new structures and to ensure that improving health of the Darlington population remains key to the future work of the Darlington Partnership.
3. Following discussions with the British Heart Foundation, it has been agreed for Darlington to sign up as a 'Heart Town'. This is an initiative sponsored by the British Heart Foundation as part of their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. The aim of the 'Heart Town' initiative is to work with communities and bring them together to contribute to tackling heart disease in a variety of different ways over a sustained period of time. This includes social marketing and public information campaigns, as well as specific education programmes and other practical steps, such as public events and fundraising so that everyone can contribute in a way that suits them. This will provide a focus for a variety of different initiatives and events in Darlington which are planned for 2012.

Alasdair MacConachie (on behalf of Darlington Partnership) signed up to this initiative in late December and there is a formal launch planned for early in the New Year.

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 for Darlington is being developed with key partners, and key guidance is still expected from the Department of Health early in the New Year. Briefings on the changes to public health will continue to be offered for all elected members.
5. Darlington Tobacco Control Alliance continues to meet as a key partnership. Current work of the partnership includes supporting the community partnership in Cockerton West to develop and deliver a tobacco control project working with young people to raise awareness of second-hand smoke. Part of this project includes the production of a DVD. The Alliance has also supported the Council in their preparations around the upcoming 2012 No Smoking Day, particularly in the provision of support for their employees to access stop smoking support.

The local Stop Smoking services provided by the health Improvement team from NHS County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust, continue to achieve success in delivering

support to those who want to quit smoking in Darlington. Last quarter, 247 people successfully quit smoking in Darlington, which was above the expected target of 206.

6. The Social Norms data has been completed for seven of Darlington's secondary schools, Initial headline findings show a steady, continuing downward trend of both reported substance misuse and reported perceptions of other's misuse, demonstrating that the process is an effective preventative measure.
7. Alcohol Awareness Week included a partnership event in the market square on the 16th November which drew much interest and was well-attended. The event was well covered by local media, including the Northern Echo and BBC Tees.

### **Joint Health and Social Care Public Event 27th September 2011**

8. The local authority circulated feedback from this event in September 2011 to the community through the December 2011 edition of the Town Crier.
9. Further events for the community to access will be planned with the Clinical Commissioning Group during 2012 and more information about these events will be available as these are arranged.

### **Local Healthwatch**

10. An announcement was made on the 3rd January highlighting some changes to the timescales relating to HealthWatch delivery.
11. A new start date for Local Healthwatch has now been agreed by Government of April 2013. This is to allow more time for aligning specifications for Local HealthWatch with the development and governance arrangements for Health and Well-Being Boards.
12. Government has also identified a further £3.2m to cover start-up costs for Local HealthWatch but as yet we do not know the allocation for Darlington.
13. There is still outstanding detail about Local Healthwatch funding which we will not know about until the Local Government allocations are notified at the end of 2012.

### **Darlington Partnership**

14. At its meeting of September 14<sup>th</sup> Darlington Partnership Board agreed a proposed new structure and a revised focus for the work that it carries out. Key features are:-
  - (a) One Darlington, Perfectly Placed is agreed as the right vision for the borough.
  - (b) In the existing structure of the Partnership there are three sectors involved: public, private and third sector. Community is now included as a fourth 'work stream'.
  - (c) A greater expectation is now placed on each sector to organise its contribution to the work of the Partnership.

15. The Partnership's work will now be organised under three headings:
  - (a) Developing action priorities
  - (b) Planning for One Darlington: Perfectly Placed
  - (c) Support for Darlington Together.
16. An Implementation Plan to embed the new arrangements was agreed at the Partnership Board meeting on November 9th 2011.
17. I am leading the work on how the Community work stream within the Partnership will be developed. The Health and Partnership Scrutiny Committee have agreed to establish a Task and Finish Review Group to assist in this and to discuss how best to improve Member involvement in the Partnership's business.
18. Throughout the review there has been a clear message that the Board would like to focus on a limited number of 'Action Priorities' that can be seen to be making a difference. These 'Action Priorities' would be selected using the following criteria:-
  - (a) Impact on the outcomes expressed in the Partnership's vision
  - (b) Requires cross sector action
  - (c) Potential for Partnership to make an impact
19. At the Board meeting of 9th November the Partnership agreed that its first Action Priorities would be:-
  - (a) Vocational Opportunities for Young People
  - (b) Alcohol
  - (c) Ageing.
20. Work is now underway to develop the contributions of each sector, private, public, voluntary and community which can make a measurable impact in the short term.

### **Equalities and Engagement**

21. A programme of activity to support Talking Together about the Council's Budget has been running in December 2011 and January 2012. This has included events, phone calls, emails, online forum content, letters and forms from comments boxes placed in public buildings around the borough.
22. As of 12 December 2011 over 900 public responses had been received, including from the 134 people who attended the first three of the five public events. Proposals around school transport, Cockerton library and arts centre have been most commented upon. These figures exclude respondents who are employees of the Councils and have wished to make their views known as Council employees. This data has been collected separately.

23. With regard to supporting equalities impact assessment work on budget proposals, screening processes are now complete and work to finish assessments in individual areas is being progressed with focused work with the Parent Carers Forum, local community partnerships and other partner organisations scheduled for January 2012. Some intelligence about the negative impacts of some of the proposals has already been usefully gathered at public events.

### **Welfare Rights**

24. 74 (compared to 52 last October) new enquiries were opened during October and 55 enquiries were closed. These include both complex and one-off enquiries. In addition, 5 enquiries were dealt with as anonymous enquiries or consultancy for local authority or voluntary agency staff.
25. At the end of November the total caseload for the team was 198 cases.
26. 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 £133,346 in additional benefits has been claimed to date. A new campaign targeting people under the age of 65 who are long-term sick and disabled is planned to start in January 2012. This will target holders of the Blue Badge who do not already receive the higher rate of the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance.

**Councillor A Scott**  
**Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Health and Partnerships**