
OVERVIEW OF HEALTH AND PARTNERSHIPS PORTFOLIO

Purpose of the Report

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work under my Health and Partnerships Portfolio.

Public Health Transition

2. In my last report to Council, I reported on the Public Health Ring-fenced Grant Allocation which broadly meets current contractual commitments and local public health responsibilities. Council also agreed to waive contract procedure rule 18 for a range of contracts due to the exceptional circumstances created by the implementation of the Health and Social Care Act. Throughout February and March, Public Health specialists have been meeting with providers to establish the contractual arrangements for 2013.

Tobacco

3. On 5 February Darlington Shadow Health and Well-being Board signed off the 2012/13 action plan and agreed that the new alliance action plan time span should be 2013 – 2016 in line with the Darlington's Health and Social Care Delivery Plan. The Board was provided with highlights of success from the 2012/13 plan which centred around the following World Health Organisation (WHO) evidence-based eight strands of tobacco control:-
 - (a) Developing infrastructure, skills and capacity at local level and influencing national action.
 - (b) Reducing exposure to second hand smoke
 - (c) Helping Smokers to quit
 - (d) Media communications and social marketing
 - (e) Reducing the availability of tobacco products and reducing supply of tobacco
 - (f) Reducing the promotion of tobacco
 - (g) Tobacco Regulation
 - (h) Research, Monitoring and evaluation
4. Young people from Darlington School of Maths and Science have been interviewed for a short DVD as part of the FRESH conference. In partnership with the Darlington Tobacco Alliance the pupils have produced an eleven minute DVD which explains the health risks of children breathing second hand cigarette smoke, and explores how standardising plain packaging of cigarettes will help protect children from tobacco brand advertising.

Alcohol

5. The Home Office consultation on the National Alcohol Strategy, which included proposals on minimum unit pricing, is now closed. The campaign had a significant presence in Darlington which contributed to an overall strong response from the North East. Feedback from BALANCE is that regionally over 50 professional and organisational responses were submitted by the close of the consultation supported by 15,020 postcards, signed by members of the general public, calling for the introduction of a minimum unit price of at least 50p. The outcome of the consultation will be summarised in a future briefing.

Health and Well-being Board

6. The Health and Well-being Board met in February 2013 and considered an update from Darlington's Clinical Commissioning Group about its commissioning intentions for 2013-2014. The Board also considered the Darlington Tobacco Alliance action plan and the Carers Strategy for Darlington.
7. The Board welcomed two new board members at the February meeting from County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust and Tees Esk Wear Valley Foundation Trust.
8. A review of the Shadow Health and Well-being board was undertaken between November and January. An update about the new model for the Board moving forward in April 2013 is on the Summons for this Council meeting.

Darlington Partnership

9. I attended an Assembly held on 25 January by Darlington Partnership which brought together over 100 people from across the town to consider the impact of the Welfare Reforms on Darlington and its people. It has been estimated that the reforms will see a £14 million reduction in Darlington's economy. It was explained that several thousands of people in Darlington will be directly affected by the changes to benefits they receive.
10. The keynote speaker, Mike Dixon, the Assistant Chief Executive at Citizens Advice, explained that there are potentially very serious consequences. Many people in and out of work will be required to cope with less money and because of the way benefits will be administered in future, they will be required to manage their finances differently as payments will be made monthly and directly to them. Many more will need to pay Council Tax for the first time. He explained the effect on the Council is likely to be non-payment of Council Tax by some with debt spiralling.
11. Work is now being planned through the Darlington Partnership to put into action the proposals from the conference and to coordinate the offers of help that came from the floor. In addition, information which explains the changes, has been made available through the Partnership website for agencies working with people who are

affected.

Welfare Rights

12. Staff within the Welfare Rights Team are continuing to support delivery of front-line services to clients and in particular continuing to provide support at a tribunal level. In January, £61,469 was secured, in additional benefit, for clients. The target for 2012/13 is £960,000 with the actual total for the year to date £810,500.
13. Welfare Rights has been working in collaboration with other colleagues and organisations to raise awareness of the impact of the Welfare Reforms on the people of Darlington.
14. Training sessions have been provided to Members and to key groups of officers who work directly with residents. The training is being provided to key staff and then cascaded through teams to ensure coverage across the Council before the end of March. It is anticipated that over 800 staff will have received at least basic awareness training.

Community Advice Project (CAP)

15. The project is currently implementing an exit strategy that will capture learning and also support future work in relation to the Welfare Reform. Partners are continuing to work together to look at the best ways to move forward in the future and to exploit future external funding opportunities when possible.
16. The CAP project has over-performed against targets set by the Big Lottery and there has been a considerable amount of learning about partnership working. This learning has been captured and will be shared with both the public and voluntary sectors as part of the cap legacy.

Healthwatch

17. Four tenders were received for the delivery of Darlington Healthwatch and the tender panel met in February to assess each proposal against a scoring matrix. The panel included representatives of the local authority and the Clinical Commissioning Group.
18. Carers Federation was the successful bidder and work is currently taking place to implement the transition plan to ensure that an active Healthwatch is in place by 1 April 2013. It is re-assuring to note that the majority of Local Information Network (LINK) members have indicated a willingness to continue to support Healthwatch in the future.
19. A legacy event was held on 13 March to formally acknowledge the work that LINK volunteers have done in the past and to hand over outstanding work to Healthwatch. This will be a public undertaking that Healthwatch will build on the work that LINK has undertaken and develop it through a 'network of networks'

approach.

20. The Carers Federation was also successful in the regional contract for the provision of NHS Complaints Advocacy, where the lead commissioner is Gateshead Council. This contract includes support to all of the Councils in the North East with the exception of Northumberland who have made separate arrangements.

parkrun

21. With the support of the Sports Development Team and Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group, parkrun was successfully launched in Darlington on Saturday 15 December 2012. Initially launched in Bushy Park, Greater London, in 2004, parkrun is a national initiative which offers runners of all abilities the opportunity to undertake a free, weekly, timed 5K run around a pre-determined course. parkruns take place at 9 a.m. every Saturday morning in over 160 parks across the country, and Darlington's parkrun takes place in the South Park, starting beside the Clock Tower Bowling Green.
22. Runners are asked to register on the parkrun website, which maintains a log of their parkrun activity, and participants can be rewarded for achieving key milestones, with t-shirts, trainers, etc. provided by parkrun's main sponsors.
23. Events in Darlington are now starting to regularly attract over 100 entrants each week, and over 450 different runners have participated since the launch on 15th December 2012, with all events co-ordinated by a team of volunteers. More information on the Darlington South Park parkrun can be found at www.parkrun.org.uk/darlingtonouthpark

Councillor A Scott
Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Health and Partnerships