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**OVERVIEW OF HEALTH AND WELL BEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Health and Well Being Scrutiny Committee has undertaken: -
  - (a) **Stroke Services at Darlington Memorial Hospital** – As Chair I attended a stakeholder event at Darlington Memorial Hospital where NHS doctors and senior managers met with local stakeholders to discuss the development of the stroke service at County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust. Stephen Eames the Chief Executive stated that ‘Over the last couple of months we have made good progress. We have brought in locum staff to support our permanent consultants, and we are now more optimistic about recruiting further expertise to strengthen our team. This secures our current service and means we can continue providing stroke care from our three main sites – with acutely ill stroke patients being admitted to Darlington Memorial and University Hospital of North Durham, and patients undergoing specialist rehabilitation at Bishop Auckland.’ Of the four stroke consultants, one left at the end of January and two are approaching retirement and the Trust are actively seeking to recruit to these positions. The Trust has taken the following action to support the service; a locum Care of the Elderly consultant to support other consultants to spend more of their time with stroke patients; the Trust is actively trying to recruit locum stroke consultants; retiring consultants have agreed to stay on longer and in the process of developing other physicians to assist in the thrombolysis pathway. North East Cardio Vascular Network is carrying out a regional review looking at proposals on how to meet national standards for stroke care. Issues include looking at where stroke patients are admitted and how to network between hospitals with the potential to use technology like telemedicine (technology to help clinicians make decisions remotely) the Trust will continue to be involved in regional discussions.
  - (b) **Dementia** – The Committee has hosted a Special meeting which was themed around mental health issues and particularly dementia. Members received presentations from representatives from Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust and NHS Darlington. It was explained that dementia is a syndrome that describes a number of different illnesses, i.e. Alzheimer’s Disease, Vascular Dementia, etc and affects at least 570,000 in England and that figure is set to double within the next 30 years. It costs the NHS and Social Care more than heart disease, stroke and diabetes put together every year which equates to £17 billion. It was stressed that early diagnosis of the disease was crucial; to enable people to make decisions about their future while they are still able to do so regarding to finance matters and health care needs. The National Dementia Strategy (2009) provides a strategic quality framework within which local services that delivers quality improvements to dementia services and addresses health inequalities relating to dementia; provides advice, guidance and support across the health and social care economy in the planning, development and monitoring of services; and provides a guide to the content of high-quality health and social care services for dementia to inform the exceptions of those affected by dementia and their

families and carers. Members have been informed that Gold Standards Framework (GSF) is a three year accredited training programme, which focuses in optimising communication, planning ahead, continuity of care, team working, symptom management and support for carers. There are four levels which relate to the GSF which are individual, organisational, community and national. The importance of the GSF was discussed together with the benefits of adopting the GSF. Inevitably it will be widely used, will save money, improve quality, be evidence based and supported by policy. Nationally over one thousand care homes in the country are signed up to the GSF and it can only be beneficial for the care homes in Darlington.

- (c) **Mental Health Strategy** – The Committee has received an update report on the progress being made on the Mental Health Strategy at the special themed meeting of the Committee. Members of the Committee were briefed about the current progress in terms of the developing a joint Adult Mental Health Strategy which will underpin the implementation of the most recent Government guidance/policy New Horizons. New Horizons has two main aims, improving the mental health and wellbeing of the population, and the second strand being improving the quality and accessibility of services for people with poor mental health. The strategy will have wider social benefits with regards to improved educational attainment, reduction in anti-social behaviour and a reduction in mental health related absences from employment. Health benefits will be healthy psycho social functioning (low helplessness, clear goals and high resilience, low cardiovascular disease, fewer health limitations of activities of daily living and a lower secondary health care utilisation). Members will receive further updates.
- (d) **NICE Training** – All Members of Council were invited to attend a training session which was organised by National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE). The session was focused on the NICE guidance on reducing unwanted pregnancies. It assisted in improving Members’ understanding of the role and operation of NICE, explained the value of NICE guidance in helping to frame questions that Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees can ask as part of the scrutiny process and explored the use of NICE guidance to ask questions about local investment decisions. Members who attended the session found it extremely interesting and useful. We hope the NICE Guidance will be used to influence the Committees future Work Programme and develop our scrutinising skills.
- (e) **Regional Health Scrutiny** – Councillor Newall and I have attended a Regional Health Scrutiny Member Meeting recently and listened to presentations from Professor Stephen Singleton NHS North East, Dr David Chappel, North East Public Health Observatory and Colin Shevills Balance.
- (f) **Oral Health and Dental Services** – At the last meeting of the Committee Dr Landes briefed us on oral health and dental services in Darlington. Dr Landes advised that dental practices over the last 50 years have changed and further, more positive changes have occurred since 2006; including the Primary Care Trust having control of practices locations, control over opening times and control where patients can be seen. The common themes that continue to be raised are cost, access and communication. It was noted that there has been some recent investment in Darlington with the new dental practice at Firthmoor Community Centre. There is also on going oral health promotion

in the community through Children's Centres, Sure Start, Primary Schools and Open Days.

- (g) **Transport to Health** – We have reconsidered the issue of transportation to health related appointments at our last meeting and received reports from the Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration) and the Chair of the Transport to Health Group. The previous report detailed the progress made during the first three years of the Second Local Transport Plan. This report set out the schemes and initiatives that have been implemented during the financial year 2009/10, achieving improvements for access to health facilities, promoting active travel and maintaining a good road safety record. We noted that the Council are currently consulting on developing the Third Local Transport Plan. The results of the consultation presented to Cabinet on 30th March 2010 highlighted 'people live long, healthy and active lives, travelling safely and making active travel choices' as one of its five strategic level outcomes for the Plan. A Project Manager from County Durham NHS advised us of the progress of the Travel Response Centre, which will be expanded to a Countywide booking service covering the whole of County Durham and Darlington to improve access to transport through knowledge of transport options available. There have been some changes to the East Durham Hospital Link to ensure best value and further changes to the routes are also being considered. Also the Durham Dales Interim Transport Solution service will continue for a further six months.
- (h) **Quality Accounts** – At our last Scrutiny Committee we received presentations on Quality Accounts 2009/10 from County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust and Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust. As Darlington hosts both Foundations Trusts HQ's this Committee is charged by guidance to make comment on the Quality Accounts. Members have agreed to hold a meeting to discuss the Quality Accounts in full detail and agree their views which will be feedback.
- (i) **Service Plan Performance – Quarter 3 – 2009/10** – Members of the Committee considered a report which detailed information in respect of the four service plans for which this Committee is responsible for monitoring Health Improvement, Adult Social Care, Supporting People and Public Protection. Members also considered those elements of the Sustainable Community Strategy, One Darlington: Perfectly Placed and the Local Area Agreement for which this Committee has responsibility for. It was noted that five indicators show below target performance; three in Adult Social Care (ethnicity assessments, complaints to the Ombudsman and clients receiving self-directed support) and two in Public Protection (the percentage of 'on licensing' and 'off licensing' premises signed up to the drinking code).
- (j) **Darlington: A Breast Feeding Friendly Town – Local Area Agreement Steering Group** – We have considered the last report focusing on the Local Area Agreement (LAA) Steering Group as the project has come to an end. We have noted that Darlington's breast feeding rate has steadily continued to rise and currently for 2009/10 stands at 62%; which is well above the County Durham and North East average but below the national average of 73%. The LAA initiative began in Darlington in 2005 has evidenced that dedicated accessible support, workforce development building skills and corporate engagement through policy making significant improvements in

Darlington's local breastfeeding rates and has been regularly reported to this Committee.

- (k) **Alcohol Admissions Task and Finish Review Group** – As part of the work being undertaken by each Scrutiny Committee in relation to the Director of Public Health's Annual Report entitled 'Healthier Lives for Children and Young People in County Durham and Darlington'. This Committee will scrutinise the effects of alcohol and admissions to hospital as a result of alcohol, as highlighted in the Annual Report. Currently work is being undertaken by NHS Darlington in respect of this and Members will have the opportunity to scrutinise the report in more detail in early June 2010. We have arranged a meeting with Members to discuss the terms of reference prior to the meeting in June 2010.
  - (l) **Work Programme 2010/2011** – We have given consideration to the Work Programme of this Committee for the Municipal Year 2009/10 and possible review topics. We have examined Cabinet's Forward Plan, in order to identify areas of particular interest or concern and I have extended an open invitation for the inclusion of additional items on the Committee's Work Programme.
2. Since the last meeting of Council, the Chair of the Committee has attended various briefings with Officers.

**Councillor Marian Swift**  
Chair of the Health and Well Being Scrutiny Committee