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**OVERVIEW OF HEALTH AND PARTNERSHIPS 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 Partnerships Scrutiny Committee has undertaken.

**Medium Term Financial Plan 2014/15 to 2019/20**

2. We have held a Special meeting of the Scrutiny Committee to consider proposals in the MTFP which fall under the remit of this Scrutiny Committee. The meeting gave consideration to voluntary sector – co-production of services and Public Health re-commissioning of services proposals.
3. Feedback from the meeting was presented to the Efficiency and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 30th January 2014 to enable a comprehensive response on behalf of all Scrutiny Committees to be produced and forwarded to Cabinet.

**Winter Planning and Preparedness**

4. Members have continued to receive updates from local NHS about the plans and policies in place to deal with the winter pressures. In December, Members received a presentation from the Head of Resilience and Special Operations, North East Ambulance Services (NEAS) and were assured that about the readiness of NEAS following the lessons learned from previous years, the robust business and contingency plans that are in place and the Demand and Capacity Working Group which has been established and meets monthly. There is a proactive flu campaign, although staff are reluctant to have the vaccinations and work will continue to promote the flu campaign. There is also an Escalation Policy in place and will be regularly revisited to ensure that it was fit for purpose across the region.
5. Members were assured that there is substantial capacity of four wheel drive vehicles, emergency responding on call officers and hazardous Area Response Teams. Within the South Division detailed information was provided about the numbers of crews and vehicles. The two areas of concern for NEAS are in relation to funding and hospital handover, delay and divert policy.
6. We have expressed our concerns about the number of inappropriate ambulance journeys to hospitals and ambulances waiting outside Hospitals and were advised of the new Call Back to GPs. The GP/Paramedic rapid telephone advice has been developed as a model for GPs at Urgent Care Centres to provide support for paramedics via a three to five minute ring back, giving advice to crews on scene and is being rolled out across County Durham and Darlington. The model allows paramedics attending calls to professionally assess whether there is a need for the patient to be transferred to an acute setting or, with medical advice and support,

they could be managed within primary care. This should go some way to reducing the number of ambulances that build up at the Accident and Emergency department and offer patients more alternative dispositions, such as seeing a GP at an Urgent Care Centre or a home visit.

7. We will continue to monitor winter planning and preparedness have a regular item on the agenda to provide Members with assurance that the local NHS is surviving and managing the winter pressures.

### **Relocation of Urgent Care**

8. We have been supporting the relocation of the Urgent Care Service from Dr. Piper House to Darlington Memorial Hospital from 6.00pm to Midnight which commenced on 9th December 2013 (the service having already relocated between the hours of midnight and 8.00am). We are pleased that the service commenced successfully and that GPs from within the Urgent Care Team had supported Accident and Emergency staff to alleviate the pressure.

### **Darlington Partnership**

9. We have recently received a progress report from the Darlington Partnership Director following the initiatives undertaken by the Partnership since April 2013 and considered feedback on the progress of the Community Workstream in relation to the Scrutiny Committee's recommendations.
10. The report provided details on Good Friends, Poverty in Darlington, Darlington Assembly and Community Workstream. We are pleased to that to date over 200 volunteers have been recruited to Good Friends and work is underway to match them to elderly or vulnerable neighbours. We are disappointed at the resignation of Neighbourhood Watch from the Good Friends scheme
11. We welcome the agreed comprehensive support from the Board for people facing crisis due to poverty, close to where they live, through peripatetic outreach in community settings. The aim would be to enable people to access a food bank, advice (debt, benefit and housing) and the Credit Union.
12. The focus of the Darlington Assembly was to consider how support could be provided to communities to enable them to be strong and thrive. Particular focus was on how elected Members could engage with their constituents differently in order to boost social capital and bring about change.
13. Members were pleased that a number of sessions have been held with the broader Community Groups following their work carried out focusing on the Community workstream and welcome the opportunity for the general public to attend and to discuss issues such as the changes to the probation service and the role of the Police and Crime Commissioner. A further meeting is scheduled for the spring of 2014.

## **Strategic Grants – Performance Report**

14. We have received a report outlining the performance of the organisations receiving Strategic Grants as agreed in the Cabinet report of 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013, for the completion of our Scrutiny Review.
15. Members noted that all organisations in receipt of Strategic Grants have submitted some performance reports as required although, there were some queries being followed up. The performance reports demonstrated that Darlington residents are benefitting from the use of Strategic Grant by the voluntary organisations.
16. We will continue to monitor the long-term future of Strategic Grants as they continue to be examined as part of the budget processes within the Medium Term Financial Plan.
17. The Scrutiny Committee will also receive informal updates prior to a further report being brought to Health and Partnership Scrutiny in March setting out overall performance for the year.

## **Quality Accounts**

18. Members of this Committee have recently attended Working Group meetings with Officers from County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust and Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust.
19. The information gathered at these meetings will assist us when we have to submit our commentaries to the Draft Quality Accounts for 2013/14 in May 2014.

## **Access to GP Appointments Task and Finish Review Group**

20. The Scrutiny Committee established an Access to GP Appointments Task and Finish Review Group to gather views and opinions of the general public, Healthwatch, GP Surgeries and Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group regarding access to GP appointments.
21. A progress report was submitted to the Scrutiny Committee's December meeting outlining the work undertaken and the further work that Members have agreed to undertake to enable them to gather as much evidence as possible over a prolonged period of time to create a true reflection of the availability of appointments.
22. A meeting with Jenny Chapman MP has been arranged for 17 January 2014 to share intelligence and discuss her concerns and a further meeting will also be arranged with Healthwatch to share intelligence and consider the feedback collected in Healthwatch's survey.
23. In addition Members will also carry out a survey with residents seeking information about any difficulties they have encountered accessing GP appointments during the winter months. Information has been received from local NHS partners about winter

preparedness and pressures and Members will consider how this links and impacts upon the availability of GP appointments.

### **Work Programme 2013/14**

24. We have given consideration to the Work Programme for this Committee for the Municipal Year 2013/14 and possible review topics and in doing so, we have taken into account the reduced resources available and ensured that, in recommending our work programme to Monitoring and Co-ordination Group, any work we undertake will have demonstrable outcomes and contribute to the work of the Council and its strategic aims and objectives.

**Councillor Wendy Newall**  
**Chair of the Health and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee**