
OVERVIEW OF HEALTH AND PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Health and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee has undertaken.

Work Programme 2014/15

2. We have given consideration to the Work Programme for this Committee for the Municipal Year 2014/15 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.
3. Our Work Programme continues to develop and Scrutiny Members have agreed to continue to monitor the Stroke Pathway, the progress of the co-location of Accident and Emergency Services and Urgent Care at Darlington Memorial Hospital (DMH) and the possible effects on DMH of the change to service provision to Women and Children's Services at The Friarage Hospital, Northallerton.
4. Members have also agreed to hold a Special Meeting to investigate the impact of sight loss on Darlington residents and other related eye health issues.
5. To continue their work on reducing health inequalities and taking into consideration the information contained in the Darlington Health Profiles 2014, Scrutiny Members have agreed to undertake a Task and Finish Review Group on Healthy Eating and the impact of poor nutrition on higher rates of obesity, high blood pressure and diabetes.

Healthy Darlington

6. Scrutiny received a presentation outlining the functions of the newly-established Healthy Darlington Hub which will be located within the Dolphin Centre in October.
7. The Hub is led by a team of trained specialists in behaviour change and will be a new single point of contact from October for individuals who wish to participate in a healthier lifestyle.

8. Healthy Darlington will be open seven days a week and will be available for both walk-in clients and medical practitioner referrals. It will make the most of modern technology and communication methods and sign-post, where appropriate, to medical professionals.
9. Members welcomed the Local Authority initiative which will help enhance the well-being and quality of life of residents.

Darlington Health Profile 2014

10. The Director of Public Health gave Members a presentation on the key messages contained in the Darlington Health Profile 2014 which shows how the health of Darlington residents compares with that of the region and the rest of England.
11. The health of people in Darlington is variable compared with the England average. Deprivation is higher than average and it is of real concern to Members that around 21.7 per cent of children are living in poverty.
12. We were pleased to note that life expectancy for both men and women has steadily increased, however a major gap remains for men of 12.4 years and women eight years between the most deprived and least deprived areas of Darlington. The premature death rate (under 75 years of age) remains above average.
13. Among the priorities to reduce health inequalities locally are adult nutrition and Members will be investigating this in the Healthy Eating Task and Finish Review and hospitalisation for harm caused by excess alcohol consumption which is part of an ongoing Task and Finish Review.

Strategic Grants

14. The Strategic Grants Task and Finish Review Group met to give consideration to the report produced by the external consultant to review infrastructure support in Darlington.
15. There was a wide range of discussion on the content of the report and its recommendations, the differing needs of the voluntary and community sector and what would be required of the infrastructure organisation which would have to be transparent in its processes and engage with the sector so that they understood what was being done and by which organisation.
16. Conversely the sector and other key stakeholders had to engage with infrastructure to shape priorities and manner of delivery, ensuring that it fits with organisational needs.
17. Scrutiny held a Special Meeting to give consideration to a joint action plan that had been developed which outlined a series of steps that needed to be taken within six months' time and detailed required evidence to demonstrate delivery.

18. We were also advised that monthly monitoring meetings have been established to assess progress and any proposed changes would enable a specification to be drawn up in the future.

Councillor Wendy Newall
Chair of the Health and Partnership Scrutiny Committee