

HEALTH AND PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

12 May, 2016

PRESENT - Councillor Newall (in the Chair); Councillors Crichlow, Donoghue, Regan, EA Richmond, S Richmond, H Scott, J Taylor and Tostevin. (9)

APOLOGIES – Councillor Nutt. (1)

ABSENT – Councillor Haszeldine. (1)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE –

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE - Miriam Davison, Director of Public Health, Mary Hall, Senior Engagement Officer and Karen Graves, Democratic Officer.

HP76. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

HP77. MINUTES - Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meetings of this Scrutiny Committee held on 15 and 18 April, 2016.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes be approved as a correct record.

HP78. NOTES OF MEETING – Submitted – The notes of the meeting (previously circulated) of the Drug and Alcohol Team (DAAT) Task and Finish Review Group held on 22 April, 2016.

RESOLVED – That the notes be approved as a correct record.

HP79. NOTES OF MEETING – Submitted – The notes of the meeting (previously circulated) of the Strategic Grants and Social Fund Task and Finish Review Group held on 25 April 2016.

RESOLVED – That the notes be approved as a correct record.

HP80. MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2016/17 TO 2019/20 – The Committee met to consider its response to the proposals contained within the Medium-Term Financial Plan which were within its remit.

Reference was made to the various meetings of this Scrutiny Committee which had been held to discuss the proposals contained within the core offer, the Impact Assessment Forms and the Futures Fund and to two Task and Finish Review Group meetings which had looked specifically at the impact and mitigation against the proposals in relation to the Drug, and Alcohol Team (DAAT) and Substance Misuse; and Strategic Grants and the Social Fund.

Reference was made to the discussions which had taken place around the proposals within the core offer and the level of service delivery to be provided in the future within that offer and Members very much regret the decisions the Council will have to make around the diminishing services which impact on the most vulnerable residents in the Town.

Members expressed concern at the impact of ceasing a number of discretionary services and it was stressed that it was imperative that Partners engage and explore innovative ways of working in order to focus on the outcomes for residents in these challenging circumstances.

Particular reference was also made to the cumulative impacts of some of the proposals across the same individuals or groups of individuals and it was reported that further work in relation to that cumulative impact had been undertaken by the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of this Scrutiny Committee, the Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee and the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee which will be reported to the Efficiency and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

Members also took into consideration the views of Tracy Freeman, representing First Stop Darlington, who attended the meeting.

RESOLVED – That the following views and comments be forwarded to the Efficiency and Resources Scrutiny Committee as this Scrutiny Committee’s majority response to the proposals contained within the Medium Term Financial Plan 2016/17 to 2019/20 which are within its remit :-

- (a) the thanks of this Scrutiny Committee be extended to the Officers who have supported and provided information to enable it to make an informed recommendation on those proposals contained within the Medium Term Financial Plan which are within its remit;
- (b) in relation to the Core Offer, this Scrutiny Committee notes the review of services which have been undertaken to ascertain which services the Council must provide by law, the cost of those services and to what level they should be delivered using a risk based approach and supports the findings of that review;
- (c) in relation to the Impact Assessment Forms, this Scrutiny Committee regrettably accepts the proposals and information contained therein, however, has particular concerns on the following proposals:-
 - i. **S13 – Social Fund Budget** – Members raised concerns around the effect of these proposals on the most vulnerable people in the Borough as several proposals affected the same group of people however noted that provision had been made in the Futures Fund, detailed below, for the retention of this service;
 - ii. **S14 – Strategic Grants** – Members raised significant concerns around the effect this proposal would have on various organisations as smaller organisations facing a small budget cut would experience a massive impact, whereas some larger organisations would feel less of an impact; resulting in a varying degree of consequences. Members also took into

account the impact assessment undertaken on all voluntary organisations currently in receipt of strategic grant and other funding, including discretionary rate relief and waste collection arrangements;

- iii. **HP8 – Healthwatch Contract and Complaints Advocacy** – Members raised concerns around the proposals to the service, provided by Healthwatch as the current budget would be cut by 50 per cent, with effect from April 2017, resulting in a much more streamlined service offered by fewer staff, no office space and providing only statutory functions;
- iv. **HP3 and S2 – Substance Misuse and Drug and Alcohol Team (DAAT)** – Members raised substantial concerns around the impact this proposal would have on vulnerable people and performance management of the service. Serious concerns were expressed at the loss of expertise and the results achieved. Members raised concerns that this proposal would have an impact on capacity to engage in proactive work and support partners in the work to tackle alcohol and drug misuse.. Members have worked well with The Gate (The Darlington Substance Misuse Services) and have been impressed by the dedication of The Team and will continue to work with and support them; and
- v. **S9 – Obesity Management** – Serious concerns are raised regarding this proposal particularly around young people and physical activity and the impact on vulnerable people. Members note that the loss of the Healthy Darlington Hub will limit the Council’s ability to bring about behavioural change, however, the Healthy Darlington approach could potentially be utilised to influence the Public Sector and NHS Organisations to work together for positive outcomes, as highlighted in the prevention element of the NHS 5 Year Forward View and Social Prescribing in the Better Care Fund.

(d) in relation to the Futures Fund, this Scrutiny Committee would urge Cabinet to :-

- i. retain the amount of £13,000 to ensure business, public sector, voluntary organisations and the Council continue the partnership to develop and deliver solutions to problems and opportunities;
- ii. retain the amount of £220,00 in relation to crisis support and community care fund and financial inclusion The crisis element of £50k to be pooled with the £50k for financial inclusion to form a contract for a new wrap around service. The remaining £120k to be used for community Care support;
- iii. retain a staffing budget of £50k for the Community Engagement Team to stimulate and support the development of the voluntary sector in Darlington and a one-off funding of £50k to support public sector volunteering;
- iv. retain the amount of £100,000 to help develop new initiatives with the Voluntary Sector in particular in respect of support to vulnerable children;

- v. retain the amount of one off match funding of £20,000 to the County Durham Charity Foundation to assist smaller community organisations deliver projects and investments. Members hope that partners will also contributed towards this to increase the funding pot; and
- vi. retain the amount of £80,000 to ensure the Move More element of Healthy Darlington is retained to continue supporting involvement in Sport and Physical Activity, in particular engaging schools, volunteers, clubs and coaches.

(NOTE – The minority view of the Scrutiny Committee was to defer some recommendations on the Futures Fund until all of the Scrutiny Committees have completed their investigations).