
OVERVIEW OF HOUSING, HEALTH AND PARTNERSHIPS PORTFOLIO

Purpose of the Report

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the main areas of work under my Housing, Health and Partnerships Portfolio were as follows:-

Public Health

2. The Darlington Stop Smoking Hub (the new stop smoking service) is well established following commencement in April 2017 with anyone who wants to stop smoking being able to access support to quit via www.darlingtonstopsmokinghub.org.uk.
3. Youth Mental Health First Aid training is being offered to all School Nurses in Darlington as part of the Future in Minds programme. This follows on from the success of the first cohort which trained 62 staff from Schools across Darlington.
4. The Mindful Schools programme continues across the Borough with 39 staff across six secondary schools and 19 primary schools, each attending Personal Mindfulness and Train the Trainer courses, which will enable them to deliver pupil mindfulness courses throughout the autumn term.
5. During Mental Health Awareness week in May a social media campaign to reduce stigma towards mental health in young people was very well received. Posters designed by Darlington College students were used in the campaign with one poster being shared over 200 times, reaching over 20,000 people.
6. Since the last meeting of Council the Crime and Victims Commissioner has allocated his 2017 Community Safety Fund. The Darlington projects to benefit from this fund are 700 Club, for work to tackle begging in the Town and the 'Kicks' programme run by Middlesbrough Football Club Foundation, delivered at Eastbourne Sports Complex.

Darlington Partnership

7. I attended the Best of Darlington Awards ceremony on 19 May. The event was held at the Dolphin Centre as changes made to Darlington College foyer made that venue unsuitable.
8. The event attracted the largest audience to date with close to 380 people attending. There had been 150 nominations received and so the event celebrated worthy

contributors to life in Darlington from dedicated volunteers through to outstanding businesses supporting the community.

9. This year's Festival of Ingenuity will be held on 22 and 23 of September. Though the focus of celebrating Darlington's Ingenious businesses and enthusing young people will remain the same, there will be a range of new interactive exhibitions on display. The Festival will be the culmination of a week of business engagement events aimed at raising the national profile of Darlington.

Healthwatch Darlington (HWD)

10. The latest Darlington Organisation Together network met to enable smaller voluntary and community groups to update members on their work and to collaborate with other organisations on key projects.
11. In relation to information and signposting HWD has been re-evaluating its communication systems, due to reduced capacity, in order to gather information and inform people. The generic survey is being re-launched and advantages are being taken of online social media opportunities.
12. HWD are encouraging volunteers via social media and new in house training properties and currently exploring ways in which it can work closely with the CQC.
13. HWD has concerns at the lack of engagement from the Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STP) Board and that there have been no meetings since December 2016 regarding the STP's.
14. HWD continues to gather the views of service users in relation to local Maternity Services; provide signposting information for members of the public and organisations; give advice to a concerned relative regarding mental health services for a patient over the age of consent who was unwilling to share information of their illness; and suggested a member contact the Patient Experience after receiving an injury from an injection incorrectly administered.

Health and Well Being Board

15. The Darlington Health and Wellbeing Board met 22 June. The Board considered the Clinical Commissioning Group's Annual Report, the Better Care Fund year end position, updates on the development of the Children and Young People Plan and Health and Wellbeing Plan.

The Board also received a presentation about the Darlington Healthy New Town Programme.

Housing Services

Red Hall

16. The community development work is moving on with the formation of a Friends of Red Hall group. This group is open to any residents who want to come forward

with ideas about improving the area. They are independent of the Council and supported by the Groundwork Trust. The numbers involved in the group are growing and a number of ideas are now being developed. It is hoped that the group will play an increasingly prominent role in the life of Red Hall. A representative of the group has recently become a member of the Red Hall Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy Liaison Group.

17. A new play area has been created at Red Hall, following extensive consultation with local residents. As well as equipment for children, an outdoor gym for older children and adults has been provided with funding from Healthy New Town project. This will also provide parents who accompany their children with the opportunity to take some exercise. The Gym is separated from the play area by use of landscaping. The existing play area was removed after consultation with residents and replaced with a multipurpose ball game area.

New Build

18. The handover of Mickelton Close, Lascelles Park has been completed and is now fully let. This proved to be a very popular development of 24 flats and four houses. Ground floor flats are designed with flat floor showers and generous space standards as well as featuring a number of other lifetime homes standards, making them ideal for people with disabilities and poor mobility.

Stock Condition Survey

19. Stock Condition surveys have now started and cover both the inside and outside of the house. The surveys are an important source of information about the condition of our stock that will help direct future maintenance planning. A sample survey is being conducted. The surveys are brief and will cause little or no disruption to tenants who have been informed of the surveys and asked to cooperate if contacted.

Community Fund

20. Sedberg Anglo Saxon Farmers made a successful bid to the Community Fund for the provision of a poly tunnel. The project started in Sadberge in 2016 to coincide with the development of a history trail. The group is made up of children and the aim is to grow fruit and vegetables that would have been found in Anglo Saxon times. It also helps make them aware of fresh food and how it is produced. The food produced is eaten by the children and the remainder is distributed around the village.
21. The Friends of Red Hall Group have made a successful bid for gardening materials to support a garden competition. With the work to improve properties complete, a garden competition is being organised to help to build pride in the area and to encourage residents to become involved in gardening. The Primary School have also become involved and some of the funds will go towards purchasing plants and plant pots for children to grow their own plants. Support and advice is being provided by the Groundwork Trust and High Grow.

Universal Credit

22. Following the introduction of Universal Credit to Darlington an increasing number of tenants are now receiving their benefit payment through this system. At present there are 80 tenants in receipt of Universal Credit but this number will rapidly increase as the Government extends the scope of the roll out next year. In order to help tenants negotiate this new system and reduce the risk of rent arrears the Money Wise service has developed their working relationships with local DWP managers. Monthly meetings are held to discuss registered Universal Credit claims. Work continues with both the Department for Works and Pensions and the claimant to ensure the claim is processed promptly and accurately as well as providing support as appropriate to claimants.

Councillor A Scott
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