
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. I supported World No Tobacco Day on 31 May 2018 by tweeting messages about the impact from cigarettes and exposure to second hand smoke.
3. On 6 June 2018 I co-hosted a 'Big Conversation' about tackling domestic abuse and sexual violence in Darlington. This discussion was on behalf of the Chairs of the Health and Wellbeing Board, The Community Safety Partnership and both Safeguarding Boards. The subsequent report is being shared across all of the above groups as it is a significant area of common interest.

Darlington Partnership

4. I attended the Best of Darlington Awards ceremony on 18 May which was organised by Darlington Partnership. The event was held at the Dolphin Centre and was attended by over 400 guests making it the largest ever Best of Darlington. There were new categories this year which recognised the efforts of Darlington Cares volunteers. On behalf of Darlington Borough Council I presented the award for Contribution to the Community.

Health and Well Being Board

5. At the meeting of the Health and Well Being Board held in March 2018 the priorities of the Board were discussed and an action plan was agreed for future meetings of the Board, to address those priorities through a focused 'life course' approach. The meeting of the Board held on 12 July 2018, which I Chaired, was the second meeting to follow this approach and the agenda focused on the priority of 'Living Well', with a presentation being given on 'Routes to Work' together with a number of reports and plans relating to that priority including Healthy New Towns, Suicide Prevention and Mental Health in the workplace.
6. Other issues considered at the meeting included a verbal update by the NHS Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group on the Integrated Care Systems (formerly Sustainable Transformation Plan) and an update report on the work of Healthwatch Darlington.

Housing Services

Universal Credit

7. Staff within Housing and Revenues and Benefits services worked tirelessly to ensure that the full roll-out of Universal Credit in Darlington was successfully completed on 20 June 2018.
8. From that date, most people of working age making a new claim for benefit (including Housing Benefit paid by the Council) will now claim Universal Credit from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). This has started the process to move everyone onto Universal Credit which is due to be completed by 2023.
9. The DWP planned the implementation of Universal Credit in Darlington to ensure that residents have received the right information, advice and support. Training has been delivered to front-line staff, Members, private landlords and local voluntary and community groups.
10. Additional resources have been brought in to assist Council Tenants in making their claim to Universal Credit and to provide budgeting support to ensure they can pay their rent and sustain their tenancies.

Red Hall

11. The Friends of Red Hall Group are in the final stages of planning a Summer Festival that will take place on 12 August 2018. The Friends Group have entered into a partnership with Stockton Riverside Festival in order to run this event which is the first large scale event the Friends will have run independently. They have also developed outline plans for a Community Garden which was inspired by a visit to Todmorden to see the Incredible Edible project. The Friends plan to grow a mixture of vegetables, herbs, fruit and flowers which will be free to pick. As well as plans to engage more people in the community in gardening it is hoped that this will encourage healthy eating.
12. As part of the regeneration of Red Hall and in partnership with the Healthy New Towns project a new walking route, to include specially designed benches, is being developed in Red Hall. A designer worked with children from Red Hall Primary School and the benches will be installed in four locations at the beginning of July. The benches are 1000 paces apart and each Bench will reflect the history and wildlife of its immediate area.

Holiday Hunger

13. The Department for Education has set up a fund for a holiday hunger programme this Summer. The aim of the programme is to identify the need for this type of initiative. Children North East obtained funding for last Summer and has once again been successful in its bid for this Summer. Children North East will lead one of eight projects across England and Darlington has been invited to participate in this year's programme. The focus of the programme will be the impact on educational attainment and therefore the delivery will be through schools with

Darlington being asked to nominate one secondary and two primary schools to participate. These schools have not yet been confirmed as the success of the bid has only recently been announced.

Lifeline Services - Activities

14. Staff in the Lifeline Service are working to build a range of activities to help address the needs of the older and vulnerable residents in sheltered and extra care schemes and in local communities.
15. Social isolation can have a detrimental effect on the health and wellbeing of older and vulnerable people, which in turn places pressures on other services including Health and Adult Social Care and in particular GP and emergency services.
16. Activities include:
 - (a) A dedicated team called Move More which visits schemes and provides activities for the residents and the local community, including chair based and gentle exercises through to archery and darts;
 - (b) Residents in one scheme have applied for a social fund for a 'Hen Power' project. Hen Power encourages elderly residents to become involved in the day-to-day raising, care and feeding of hens;
 - (c) Students from local colleges visit schemes which helps the students have practical experience for their education, raises moral and improves communication for the residents and local community and
 - (d) Volunteers are being recruited to share their skills and bring value to themselves and the residents. There are currently four volunteers going into the schemes delivering programmes such as flower arranging and ancestry research.

Councillor A Scott
Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Health and Partnerships