

**COUNCIL**  
**14 JULY 2022**

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**OVERVIEW OF HEALTH AND HOUSING PORTFOLIO**

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**Purpose of the Report**

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

**Public Health**

2. Making Every Contact Count (MECC) is training for front line staff to provide them with the right skills and confidence to be able to have bite sized discussions about key public health topics and issues with service users and customers about a range of health topics.
3. A staff training programme is being delivered to our teams across the Council. This includes training sessions being delivered directly to staff. This is being supplemented with a programme of specific 'Toolbox Talks' on specific topics such as smoking, weight and exercise with an Academy 10 online training module in development to ensure that all colleagues have a grounding in the principles of MECC.
4. Following the success of the programme last year our Public Health team are commissioning an outdoor activity programme to be delivered across multiple sites across the borough that are accessible to residents by foot, encouraging play and participation with easy access. The programme will be available for young people between 8- 12 to "play" in their local green spaces through the offer of a package of non-traditional sports and team building activities which focused on community cohesion and enjoying being active outdoors. The cost to participants will be free and will be delivered over the coming summer holidays.
5. Recently our Public Health team have worked in partnership with Environmental Health and Education to develop a resource package for Early Years settings such as nurseries and childminders that supports them in achieving a commons standard in ensuring that all children in their care have access to good nutrition. This has included the production of videos and healthy eating tips for busy parents and carers. To date three nurseries and 10 childminders have achieved the standard with more currently working towards achieving this.

**Naloxone Programme**

6. Naloxone is a drug that can reverse the effects of opioids overdoses, such as Heroin, Methadone, Morphine and Buprenorphine. Naloxone can even save someone's life if it is used quickly after they have overdosed on opioids. Medical Professionals have been using Naloxone in emergencies for many years.
7. The Public Health team are working jointly with five different community organisations to ensure that kits are made available and an increasing number of people in the community

are trained to use Naloxone for the purpose of saving lives from overdose in our communities.

8. So far twenty staff have been trained with 20 kits being issued with further training booked for staff and individuals in more community organisations to initially target those who are working with people who are access drug treatment and their families and loved ones.

### **Health and Well Being Board**

9. The Health and Wellbeing Board met on 7 July 2022. The main discussion items included an update on the Integrated Care System and the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment.
10. Other issues considered at the meeting included the Terms of Reference for the Board.

### **Housing Services**

#### **Anti-Social Behaviour**

11. Our Housing Services team were recently awarded a possession order by Darlington County Court against a tenant living in Council accommodation in the North Road area and the tenant was subsequently evicted on 17 May as a result of their actions.
12. The tenant had subjected neighbours to various forms of anti-social behaviour, which included a firearms offence and intimidation. Tenancy Enforcement Officers worked collaboratively with the Police and residents to secure this eviction and this work reinforces the terms and conditions of our new tenancy agreement that we will not tolerate anti-social behaviour in our Council properties.

#### **DocuSign**

13. New Council tenants now have the option to sign their new tenancy agreements electronically through DocuSign. This provides a more efficient service, without the need for new tenants to visit the Town Hall and supports the Council's Customer Services and Digital Strategy. New tenancy packs have also been created to provide useful information for tenants about their new home, including a repairs handbook and advice on fire safety, water safety and support with paying their rent.

#### **Homes for Ukraine**

14. As I previously reported, the Homes for Ukraine scheme is providing accommodation in Darlington for Ukrainian nationals and their immediate family. Currently, we have 39 sponsors registered as hosts and 29 Ukrainian households who have arrived in Darlington, including 39 adults and 33 children. Our team continue to undertake property and safeguarding checks and provide support and advice to families and sponsors to ensure they settle successfully here in Darlington.

## **New Build**

15. Work on the Lancaster Close phase 2 new build site has now been completed. Despite the difficulties of delivering this project during Covid, we have delivered 56 new Council homes and apartments and they have now been allocated to local residents. This site represents a further commitment to deliver affordable homes in Darlington, with over £8.6 million invested by Housing Services.

## **Climate Change**

16. Work on the Local Authority Delivery grant phase 1b (LAD1b) has now been completed. £1.26 million of Government grants secured by our Housing Services team have funded new loft Insulation and/or windows to 709 Council homes.
17. Work has also been completed on the Local Authority Delivery grant phase 2 (LAD2). £162k of Government grants have funded upgrades, including new solar panels, loft insulation and Air Source Heat Pumps.
18. We are currently appointing contractors to work on the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund project and it is anticipated that work will start in the next few months. The £290k Government grants will be used to fund a full package of measures to improve the energy efficiency, including external wall and cavity wall insulation, loft insulation, double glazed windows and solar panels.

## **Dolphin Centre**

19. The Dolphin Centre was exceptionally busy during the May half term holiday and the lead up to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations. Swimming, bowling and soft play welcomed many families and hospitality was particularly busy alongside the outdoor market square events programme that celebrated the Jubilee.
20. Our indoor events programme continues to grow and has facilitated a number of large-scale events, including a new MMA (Mixed Martial Arts) show which attracted 650 people that travelled from across the country. The event brought with it additional spend in town centre hotels and hospitality.
21. The wellness packages funded through the Government's Workforce Retention and Recruitment Fund have been extremely popular. Packages have been made available to adult care sector workers as a method to promote the sector for employment and retain existing staff. Uptake on the personal wellness package, which includes free membership at the Dolphin Centre and the family package which includes vouchers to use in bowling, soft play, swimming and the pantomime, have been equally popular.

## **Holiday Activity Fund**

22. Four programmes took place over the May half-term holiday week and were held at Skerne Park Community Centre, Firthmoor Community Centre, Longfield Academy and the Dolphin Centre, providing spaces for 160 children. Planning is well under way for a broad and diverse range of programmes to be available over the school summer holidays, with the aim of providing spaces for 1,300 children over the 6-week holiday period.

### **Firthmoor Community Centre Multi Use Games Application**

23. The Darlington Move More Team has submitted an £80,000 Football Foundation grant application in partnership with Firthmoor Community Centre to upgrade the ageing Multi Use Games Area on the site.
  
24. The Football Foundation has identified the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) for potential investment to develop a plan to deliver football and other activities on site. Consultation work has taken place with the Firthmoor and Maidendale Nursery, Firthmoor Primary School, Darlington School Sports Partnership on a potential design, and if successful the new MUGA will be ready for use by the end of the year.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Nicholson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Councillor Kevin Nicholson**  
**Cabinet Member for Health and Housing**