

COUNCIL
24 NOVEMBER 2022

OVERVIEW OF HEALTH AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

Better Care Fund

2. Scrutiny welcomed an update report on the progress of the submission of the Darlington Better Care Fund Plan for the 2022/23 programme and the review across all funded schemes.
3. The Better Care Fund (BCF) is a programme spanning the NHS and Local Government which seeks to join up health and care services and integrated care boards (ICBs) and local government are required to agree a joint plan which is owned by the Health and Wellbeing Board.
4. We noted that the plan for Darlington was submitted to the BCF national team on 26 September following endorsement by the Programme Board and that a service review is underway across all funded schemes and is due to be completed by the end of December 2022.
5. We welcome an update on the outcome of the service review at a future meeting of this Scrutiny Committee.

Darlington Drug and Alcohol Service (STRIDE)

6. We welcomed a presentation from the Contracts Manager and Interim Executive Director of Business Development, With You, on the Darlington Drug and Alcohol Service (STRIDE).
7. Scrutiny were provided with details of the 2021/22 performance headlines, including a comparison against 2020/21. We noted in particular the improvements in relation to the number of people in treatment, successful completion and prison to community engagement. We were pleased to hear that the service has been rated Good by CQC in all areas.
8. The presentation outlined the future ambitions for the service and we viewed a video, detailing how With You has made a difference in Darlington, which included interviews with service users.
9. We discussed the importance of partnership working and also alcohol related deaths. We were informed that both drug and alcohol usage were a concern in Darlington, however alcohol mortality rates exceed those of opioids and the effects from increased alcohol usage following covid were now becoming evident.

10. We also discussed the new location for the service on Tubwell Row, noting that the move will be completed by Christmas and that this new location is more accessible for service users. Members look forward to undertaking a visit of the new premises once the move has been completed.

Housing Services Fire Safety Policy

11. We received a report on the draft Housing Services Fire Safety Policy 2022-2027 prior to its consideration by Cabinet on 6 December 2022.
12. The policy sets out how the Council will provide staff, residents, visitors and partner organisations in the sheltered housing and extra care schemes with clear guidelines as to how to prevent fires and actions to take in the event of a fire.
13. We noted the consultation undertaken with the Tenants Panel and that the Panel are in support of the proposed policy.
14. This Scrutiny Committee supports the onward submission of the draft Housing Services Fire Safety Policy 2022-2027 to Cabinet for approval.

Healthwatch Darlington Annual Report 2021/2022

15. Members welcomed a presentation from the Chief Executive Officer, Healthwatch Darlington on the Healthwatch Darlington Annual Report 2021/2022 and recognised their valuable work.

Darlington Health Profile 2021/2022

16. The Public Health Principal gave a Members a PowerPoint presentation on the key messages contained within the Darlington Health Profile 2021/2022 which shows how the health of Darlington residents compares with that of the region and the rest of England.
17. Members noted that the health of people in Darlington is varied compared with the England average and Darlington's profile is similar to the North East regional average.
18. We discussed in particular the figures relating to obesity levels in adults and children. The Public Health Principal informed Members of the mechanism for determining obesity levels for adults. We noted that obesity figures for Darlington are comparative to the North East and further work is required to understand and address the obesogenic environment.

Work Programme

19. We have given consideration to the Work Programme for this Committee for the Municipal Year 2022/23 and possible review topics. The work programme is a rolling programme and items can be added as necessary.

Councillor Ian Bell
Chair of the Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee