

HEALTH AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 2 November 2022

PRESENT – Councillors Bell (Chair), Heslop, Layton, McEwan, Newall and Mrs H Scott

APOLOGIES – Councillors Dr. Chou, Mills, Preston and Wright

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Michelle Thompson (Healthwatch Darlington), Sarah Allen (We Are With You), Gary Besterfield (We Are With You) and Rachael Stray (County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Penny Spring (Director of Public Health), Christine Shields (Assistant Director Commissioning, Performance and Transformation), Anthony Sandys (Assistant Director - Housing and Revenues), Ken Ross (Public Health Principal) and Hannah Miller (Democratic Officer)

HH19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

HH20 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS SCRUTINY HELD ON 31 AUGUST 2022

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 31 August, 2022.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 31 August, 2022 be approved as a correct record.

HH21 BETTER CARE FUND

The Assistant Director Commissioning, Performance and Transformation submitted a report (previously circulated) updating Members on progress of the submission of the Darlington Better Care Fund Plan for the 2022/23 programme and the review across all funded schemes.

The submitted report stated that the Better Care Fund (BCF) was a programme spanning the NHS and Local Government which sought to join up health and care services; integrated care boards (ICBs) and local government were required to agree a joint plan for using pooled budgets to support integration, which was governed by an agreement under section 75 of the NHS Act (2006); and the plan was owned by the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Details were provided of the four national conditions for funding, three of which remain as previous years, with a change to national condition 4; the four key metrics that the plan must deliver against were outlined along with funding for 2022/23. Members were informed that the funding package was not new monies.

It was stated that the plan for Darlington was submitted to the BCF national team on 26 September following endorsement by the Programme Board; Health and Wellbeing areas

had been advised that the outcome of the assurances of all plans would not be completed until 24 October; and a service review was underway across all funded schemes and was due to be completed by December 2022.

Discussion ensued regarding horizon scanning; the Assistant Director Commissioning, Performance and Transformation assured Members that the service review would provide clarity and help to identify which schemes would require co-funding; and that all services worked collaboratively as a system to ensure the right services would continue to receive funding.

RESOLVED – (a) That the expected submission of the Darlington 22/23 Plan and approval of the plan towards the end of November be noted.

(b) That the programme review be noted and a report be tabled at a future meeting of this Scrutiny Committee, detailing the outcome of the review.

HH22 DARLINGTON DRUG AND ALCOHOL SERVICE (STRIDE)

The Contracts Manager and Interim Executive Director of Business Development gave a PowerPoint presentation (previously circulated) on the Darlington Drug and Alcohol Service (STRIDE).

The presentation provided details of the 2021/22 performance headlines, including a comparison against 2020/21. Particular reference was made to the improvements in relation to the number of people in treatment, which had increased by 10.7 percent; that successful completion had increased to 23.3 per cent from 13.2 per cent; and prison to community engagement had increased to 59.6 per cent, compared to a national average of 37 per cent

Members were informed that deaths in treatment had increased from 1.2 per cent to 2.2 per cent which was to be expected in light of increased footfall and the deaths were predominantly alcohol related. Members also noted that the service had been rated Good by CQC in all areas.

The future ambitions for the service were outlined; and Members viewed a video, detailing how With You made a difference in Darlington, which included interviews with service users.

Discussion ensued regarding the importance of partnership working; Members were informed of the work being undertaken with Darlington Memorial Hospital to develop an alcohol pathway; and following a question, Members were informed that the service did not have a waiting list and the procedure for responding to a DNA was outlined. Members requested figures in relation to the performance headlines.

Further discussion ensued regarding the alcohol related deaths; Members were informed that both drug and alcohol usage were a concern in Darlington, however alcohol mortality rates exceeded those of opioids and the effects from increased alcohol usage following covid were now becoming evident.

Following a question regarding the new location for the service on Tubwell Row Members were advised that the move would be completed by Christmas and this new location was

more accessible for the service users. Members welcomed a site visit once the move had been completed.

RESOLVED – That the Contracts Manager and Interim Executive Director of Business Development, We Are With You, be thanked for their informative presentation.

HH23 HOUSING SERVICES FIRE SAFETY POLICY

The Assistant Director Housing and Revenue submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the draft Housing Services Fire Safety Policy 2022-2027 (also previously circulated) prior to its consideration by Cabinet on 6 December 2022.

It was reported that Darlington Borough Council provides 355 homes for local residents in 7 sheltered housing schemes and 3 extra care schemes; and the policy set out how the Council would provide staff, residents, visitors and partner organisations in the schemes with clear guidelines as to how to prevent fires and actions to take in the event of a fire.

The submitted report provided details of the areas covered in the policy; and the Home Standard, one of the four statutory consumer standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing, set expectations for the Council to meet statutory requirements including fire safety legislation.

The report made reference to the consultation undertaken with the Tenants Panel in September 2022; Members were informed that the panel supported the proposed policy; and examples of the panels comments were outlined.

RESOLVED – That Members support the onward submission of the draft Housing Services Fire Safety Policy 2022-2027 to Cabinet.

HH24 HEALTHWATCH DARLINGTON ANNUAL REPORT 2021/2022

The Chief Executive Officer, Healthwatch gave a PowerPoint Presentation (previously circulated) updating Members on Healthwatch Darlington's Annual Report 2021/2022.

The presentation outlined Healthwatch Darlington's engagement and support during 2021/2022, with 384 people sharing their experiences of health and social care services and 197 people seeking advice and information from Healthwatch on a range of topics; and detailed the main projects undertaken by Healthwatch Darlington between April 2021 to March 2022, which included the Digital Exclusion Report in the Spring, Healthy Eating and Exercise initiative led by Youthwatch in the Summer, Maternity Experiences Report in the Autumn and the LGBT+ Experiences of Health Services report in the Winter.

Reference was made to the work undertaken in relation to supporting transformation of mental health services in the community and the campaign delivered by Youthwatch Darlington in relation to raising awareness and promoting positive lifestyle choices; and details were provided of three ways Healthwatch Darlington had made a difference for the community.

Members were informed of the work undertaken by volunteers; detailed information was

also given on the funding for the organisation and the top three priorities for 2022/23; and next steps were outlined. Members also noted the current issues being monitored by Healthwatch Darlington.

Discussion ensued regarding winter pressures and the need to understand the impact on health and wellbeing; the Chief Executive Officer highlighted the importance of working collaboratively to identify solutions.

RESOLVED – (a) That the update be noted.

(b) That the thanks of this Scrutiny Committee be extended to Healthwatch Darlington for their work.

HH25 DARLINGTON HEALTH PROFILE 2021/2022

The Public Health Principal gave a PowerPoint presentation (previously circulated) on the key messages contained within the Darlington Health Profile 2021/2022 and in doing so advised Members that Local Authority Health Profiles provided an overview of health for each local authority in England, pulling together existing information in one place and highlighting issues that can affect health in each locality.

It was reported that Health Profiles were composed of 42 separate indicators across 7 domains; the profile showed how the health of Darlington residents compared with that of the region and the rest of England; that when compared to England, half of the indicators were worse than the England average whilst the other half were statistically similar or better; and Darlington's profile was similar to the North East regional average.

The presentation outlined the indicators for each domain. Particular reference was made to life expectancy, which, for men was 13.0 years lower and for women was 10 years lower in the most deprived than in the least deprived areas of Darlington. Members also noted that 28.5 per cent of children in Darlington lived in low income families, which was worse than the England average; levels of smoking in pregnancy remained worse than the England average; the rate of alcohol related harm hospital admissions in Darlington was worse than the England average; and the estimated levels of excess weight in adults and physically active adults in Darlington were worse than the England average. It was noted that the Diabetes diagnosis rate was better than the England average, at 85.9 per cent.

Members sought clarification regarding the figures for Emergency Hospital Admissions for Intentional Self-Harm; and particular discussion ensued regarding 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, that obesity figures for Darlington were comparative to the North East and further work was required to understand and address the obesogenic environment.

RESOLVED – That the Darlington Health Profile 2021/2022 be noted.

HH26 WORK PROGRAMME

The Assistant Director Law and Governance submitted a report (previously circulated)

requesting that consideration be given to this Scrutiny Committee's work programme and to consider any additional areas which Members would like to suggest be included in the previously approved work programme.

RESOLVED – That the work programme be noted.

HH27 HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

Members were informed that the Board last met on 22 September, 2022 and that the next meeting of the Board was scheduled for 15 December, 2022.

RESOLVED – That Members look forward to receiving an update on the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board at a future meeting of this Scrutiny Committee.