

**COUNCIL**  
**23 MARCH 2023**

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**OVERVIEW OF HEALTH AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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

**Quality Accounts – County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (CDDFT)**

2. Members met with the Trust to give consideration to the Trust's Quality Accounts to enable Members to have a better understanding and knowledge of performance when submitting a final commentary on the Quality Accounts at the end of the Municipal Year.
3. Members welcomed a presentation, noting the progress against the quality priorities for 2022/23.

**Quality Accounts – Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV)**

4. Members met with the Trust to give consideration to the Trust's Quality Accounts to enable Members to have a better understanding and knowledge of performance when submitting a final commentary on the Quality Accounts at the end of the Municipal Year.
5. We received a presentation outlining the progress against the three improvement Actions for 2022/23, which are underpinned by 17 actions and performance information in relation to the nine quality metrics for Quarter 1 and Quarter 2.
6. We remain concerned regarding the Trust's performance against the quality metrics and ongoing challenges and have sought assurances from the Trust's Chief Executive Officer.

**Primary Care Access**

7. We welcomed a presentation from the Commissioning Lead – Primary Care, North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board, updating Members on Primary Care access.
8. The presentation provided Members with an overview of primary care in the Tees Valley, with details provided of the configuration and the contract requirements for practices. Reference was also made to the Primary Care Network (PCN) Contract Directed Enhanced Services (DES). Members noted the PCN enhanced access services which were available to all Darlington patients and that a mixed model was in operation in Darlington, with practices providing some hours and Primary Healthcare Darlington providing the remaining.
9. Details were provided of the findings of the GP Patient survey 2022, an independent survey run by Ipsos on behalf of NHS England and primary care appointment activity and

causes of access challenges were outlined. We noted that improvements to access included increased practice workforce and increased PCN workforce, with 244 staff funded across the Tees Valley from Additional Role Reimbursement Scheme, 33 of those being employed by Darlington PCN.

10. Members were also provided with details of additional access to GP appointments on Sundays and Bank Holidays through a Winter Resilience scheme commissioned by the ICB.
11. We discussed in particular the GP Patient Survey results which Members feel does not reflect residents feedback. Members were assured that Darlington practices implement a number of different mechanisms to capture patient feedback in addition to the GP Patient Survey.
12. We also discussed did not attends (DNAs), highlighting the need for greater work to identify barriers to access, reasons for DNAs and how these could be addressed. We have requested that this be fed back to the PCN for consideration. The Commissioning Lead – Primary Care, informed Members of the range of measures in place to address DNAs including appointment reminders and the use of social media.
13. We were advised of a range of training courses on offer to all staff in the GP practices via the Primary Care training hub, including customer service skills and managing difficult conversations and Members highlighted the need to communicate the different roles of staff in GP practices to the wider public.

#### **Housing Services Allocations Policy**

14. We received a report on the draft Housing Services Allocation Policy prior to its consideration by Cabinet on 7 March 2023.
15. Scrutiny were informed that the Council has been part of a sub-regional scheme for allocating social housing since 2009 and that a Tees Valley Common Housing Allocations Policy was adopted by the five Local Authorities, which has been in place since 2012 and was last updated in 2019.
16. We noted that the existing policy no longer meets the strategic needs for Darlington and notice has been given on Darlington Borough Council's membership of the Tees Valley Lettings Partnership, due to expire in June 2023 and that a new Housing Services Allocations Policy is required.
17. Members were provided with details of the key changes to the policy, including a number of changes to the priority banding. We noted the consultation undertaken with the Tenants Panel and that the Panel are in support of the proposed policy.
18. This Scrutiny Committee supports the onward submission of the draft Housing Services Allocations Policy to Cabinet for approval.

#### **Housing Services Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy**

19. Members received a report on the draft Housing Services Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy prior to its consideration by Cabinet on 7 March 2023.

20. The Council has a responsibility to ensure its homes are free from hazards, including damp, mould and condensation and the Housing Services Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy explains how the Council will ensure that prompt action is taken to remedy issues and support tenants, offering guidance, advice, and assistance throughout the process.
21. We noted the consultation undertaken with the Tenants Panel and that the Panel are in support of the proposed policy.
22. This Scrutiny Committee supports the onward submission of the draft Housing Services Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy to Cabinet for approval.

### **Work Programme**

23. 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.
24. We have requested that a special meeting of this Scrutiny Committee be arranged to receive an update on dental services and noted that a Housing Services Climate Change Strategy is in development and will be brought to a future meeting of this Scrutiny Committee.

**Councillor Wendy Newall**  
**Chair of the Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee**