

COUNCIL
18 JULY 2024

OVERVIEW OF HEALTH AND HOUSING PORTFOLIO

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

Water Fluoridation

2. The Government's consultation period on expanding community water fluoridation schemes across the Northeast of England has been extended until 11:59pm on 31st July 2024. As outlined in my last report, the Health and Care Act 2022 provides powers for the Secretary of State to introduce, vary and terminate community water fluoridation schemes. For clarity this consultation is being run by the Government and the decision on expanding community water fluoridation rests solely with the Secretary of State for Health.
3. The consultation is highlighted on Darlington Borough Council's website and was promoted via One Darlington magazine. Darlington Borough Council's Director of Public Health is consulting on this issue with members of the Darlington Health and Wellbeing Board. Anyone, including members and local residents, can submit responses to this public consultation. Further information is available [here](#).

Eyes on the Baby

4. Following a successful roll out in both Durham and Northumberland, we are implementing the Eyes on the Baby project in Darlington. Eyes on the Baby is a training and implementation package which will help to promote safer infant sleep and prevent sudden infant deaths. The training has been grouped into three strands based on the frequency and type of contact with families. The training will be virtual and hosted on our Safeguarding Partnerships ME learning platform.
5. There is a steering group formed that is made up of representatives across multiple services who will manage the implementation of the training. This group includes:
 - (a) Public Health
 - (b) Housing
 - (c) Early Years & Childcare
 - (d) Primary Care Network
 - (e) Durham University
 - (f) Harrogate and District Foundation Trust (0-19 Service)
 - (g) County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust

- (h) Durham Constabulary
- (i) Darlington Safeguarding Partnership

Summer Green Spaces programme

6. This year our summer holiday provision returns, delivered by Outdoor Ambition Ltd. The programme will again visit 16 sites across Darlington aimed at young people aged 7-12, with a focus on being active, team building, fun and communication. It will support those young people transitioning to secondary school as well as encourage play and utilising very local green space. This starts on Monday 29 July and will run until Friday 30 August, inclusive of the bank holiday.

Targeted Lung Health Check Programme

7. Work is underway to implement the targeted lung health check programme in Darlington from October 2024, for 3 months. People aged between 55 – 74 years who smoke or have smoked previously may be offered a lung health check through the programme. Invites will be issued on a practice-by-practice basis.
8. The targeted lung health check programme aims to find lung cancer early and sometimes before any symptoms are displayed.
9. Lung health checks also look at how well your lungs are working and can help diagnose lung cancer early. Early diagnosis can make lung cancer more treatable and make treatment more successful.
10. People who smoke will be directly referred to the Stop Smoking Service. Darlington are piloting having a Stop Smoking Advisor located in the same venue for immediate triage into the service.

Mental Health Network

11. The new Mental Health Network was launched on 5 June. This is funded by Public Health and managed by Darlington Healthwatch. It was well attended with representatives from across sectors including senior health professionals, voluntary sector representatives and faith leaders. The network will feed into the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and will align to local strategies / plans to ensure there is an output and focus, as well as utilising the time to share best practice and gain support for this important issue. The network is funded for 12 months, but discussion has already started regarding how this can be continued.

Health and Wellbeing Board

12. Work continues to develop the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, with three workshops held between May and June to develop thinking about vision, ambitions, priorities and actions. There was very good engagement with the workshops, with a whole range of agencies represented, and the next phase is to develop the content into a draft strategy.
13. The themes of the workshops and participant numbers are below:
 - (a) Workshop 1 Best start in Life (children & young people): - 25 attendees

- (b) Workshop 2 Healthy Places and Healthy Ways of Working - 15 attendees
- (c) Workshop 3 Staying Healthy: Living Well and Ageing Well - 18 attendees

Drug Strategy Investment in Treatment and Recovery (D-SITAR)

14. RAND Europe and partners at King's College London National Addiction Centre, The University of Manchester and South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust have been awarded funding through the National Institute for Health and Care Research to conduct an independent evaluation of the first three years of the 10 year drug strategy 'From Harm to Hope'. Darlington has been selected as one of ten case study sites for this study, which is looking at the funding provided to local authorities to improve treatment and recovery services for people who use drugs.
15. This research will help the government find out what does and does not work and will inform how the programme is implemented after the first three years of funding.

Housing Services

Electrical Safety Roundtable Awards

16. I am very pleased that Mark Graham, our Housing Services Electrical Manager has been selected as category winner in the Electrical Safety Roundtable Above and Beyond Awards 2023. Mark has been awarded the Changemaker of the Year 2023 for all his work going above and beyond the legal requirements for a social housing provider to improve compliance and is on track for 100% of Council properties to have a Domestic Electrical Condition Report (DEICR) dated within the last 5 years.
17. The Electrical Safety Roundtable noted that Mark was empowered to make this happen and on the ongoing journey to electrical safety has achieved incredible results. Mark has achieved a rapid turnaround in the percentage of our housing stock with a valid DEICR. Tenant safety is of the upmost importance and I am hugely grateful for the work of Mark and his team.

Tenancy Enforcement

18. Our Housing Services Tenancy Enforcement team continue to ensure that our tenants enjoy the right to a safe home and community by taking firm action against those who commit anti-social behaviour (ASB). A 12-month ASB injunction with power of arrest was obtained against a tenant's partner, residing at a Council property in the North Road ward. The injunction was obtained for alcohol related ASB, including threats with a weapon. The injunction prevents the partner from causing any ASB, otherwise risks being arrested and sent to prison, as well as the tenant losing her home.
19. In a separate case, a 2-year suspended possession order was obtained for a Council property in the Park East ward. The order was obtained following neglect of the property and lack of engagement by the tenant with Housing Services staff. A closure order for another property in the Park East ward was granted by the Magistrates Court. This means that the property has been closed and secured, preventing the tenant from entry. The tenant had engaged with drug dealing from the property and possession of various drugs

were found inside by the Police. Local residents were reported to be very happy with the firm action taken by Housing Services in partnership with the Police.

New Build

20. The first 22 properties at the Neasham Road site have been completed, including a five-bedroom house for Children's Services. 21 properties were advertised in June and interest has been very high, as expected, with over 2,000 applications received. The process of allocations is now underway, with the first tenants due to move in, in August.
21. This is a significant milestone for the largest Council housing project this century. A further phase of 18 properties is due to be completed in September, followed by a third phase of 14 properties in December. The remaining 96 properties will be completed in 2025.

Dolphin Centre

Water Safety Talks

22. In the lead up to the summer holidays and as incidents around water increase, primary schools in Darlington were offered the opportunity for the swim teaching team to attend assemblies to share important water safety messages. 20 schools in the town have benefitted from the service to raise awareness of the water safety code with children.

Students

23. A student discount card was released at the beginning of the academic year and launched in fresher's week. This has proven to be very popular, with 571 games of bowling recorded since the off-peak offer (connected to the student discount card) was released in September 2023. Just short of 500 students have taken advantage of student membership, and a total of 397 student discount cards are now in circulation. Preparation is currently underway to attend fresher's week again in September to make students aware of the offers available to them at the Dolphin Centre.

May Half Term

24. The May half term holiday period was very busy in the centre with many families visiting the pool, bowling and soft play facilities. Just short of 1,000 visits to soft play and 1,000 games of bowling were enjoyed during the week, which contributed to a very successful trading period in hospitality.

Eastbourne Sports Complex

Holiday Activity Project

25. The HAF programme (Holiday Activities and Food) is for children who are eligible for benefits related free school meals. The programme ran for 9 days over the Easter holidays and engaged with 956 children. The overall attendance was 2,031 and 17% of SEND children were engaged. The programme had a digital presence in the town and was promoted on social media. A wide variety of physical and enrichment activities were provided, including Bowling, Escape Room, Pottery Painting and Circus School. A total of 44 providers delivered on the programme.

Health in Haughton Matters

26. The Health in Haughton Matters Project continues to flourish with over 300 attendances recorded in February, March, April, and May. The project currently consists of Tai Chi, Yoga, Pilates, Dance Fit and Low Impact Fitness. The Health in Haughton Matters Committee have now formed a Facebook page to keep everyone up to date. This has facilitated participants to take ownership of the programme, which has had a significant impact on attendance.

Councillor Matthew Roche
Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Health and Housing