

COUNCIL
25 APRIL 2019

OVERVIEW OF HOUSING, HEALTH AND PARTNERSHIPS PORTFOLIO

Purpose of the Report

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

Public Health

2. A Healthy New Towns (HNT) Legacy event was held on 22 March 2019 and showcased what has been happening in Darlington, since Darlington gained HNT status one of only 10 in England. Partners shared how plans have been agreed for sustainability and legacy across our various work-streams so that the work can continue.
3. The event provided an opportunity to show how the HNT Programme has influenced plans for the built environment to create health enabling neighbourhoods, support community development and resilience, promote new models of care and embrace digital technology to support patient empowerment and choice.
4. It was National Stop Smoking Day on 13 March 2019 and the Stop Smoking team promoted the service. Stop smoking advisors were in the Cornmill Shopping Centre speaking to people and sharing information.
5. A consensus workshop was held on 15 March 2019 to consider the Health and Wellbeing Needs of Young Offenders. Health and well-being needs assessments are conducted so that commissioners can make plans for healthcare and other services, based on a sound understanding of current service provision and young people's needs.
6. Children and young people who offend often have significant health needs, contributing to the development of their offending behaviour and putting them at risk of poor outcomes in terms of health, wellbeing, education and employment. An outcomes report will be shared with the YOS Board.

Darlington Partnership

7. Darlington Partnership is focused on delivering Fairer Richer Darlington which is a programme the Council is supporting aimed at narrowing the gap for those who are struggling. I am leading the work stream on resilience. A range of activities have been started to engage different communities around Darlington and we are looking at models from around the Country which are aimed at supporting people's resilience. I also attended the first meeting of the Basics workstream steering group which is establishing task and finish groups around food poverty and financial stability.

Health and Well Being Board

8. At the meeting of the Health and Well Being Board held in January, a 'stocktake' of the Board's priorities was considered together with a review of its Terms of Reference, and it was agreed, at the meeting, that the Board would continue with the 'life course' approach but that it would have a more strategic role, promoting joint working, where possible, with a focus on health inequalities, with the Integration Board dealing with the day to day issues. A number of other amendments were made to the Terms of Reference including the frequency of meetings, and as a result, the next meeting of the Board will be held early in July 2019, with a focus of 'Starting Well'.

Housing Services

Wi-Fi in Sheltered Housing

9. A programme to provide Wi-Fi in communal areas in sheltered housing and some good neighbour schemes is now complete. This will allow residents to access the internet free of charge in communal areas. A programme of support training will be offered to residents at each scheme to help them to get the most from this opportunity.
10. The use of Echo Dots with built in Alexa is also being piloted in a couple of schemes for general use by residents. Anticipated uses include provision of general information, quick and easy entertainment such as popular songs and a memory aid. However it is hoped moving forward that some residents may choose to start using the devices in their own homes to support them in living independently and enhancing the quality of their lives. In particular it would enable connection to smart home devices, set up reminders for medication or important events and assist with loneliness and social isolation.

Scan Station

11. In January the Council introduced a new simple to use scanning station in the Customer Contact Centre in the Town Hall. This will allow customers to supply documents to the Council without queuing to see an advisor. A floorwalker is available in the Contact Centre for those in need of assistance.

Firthmoor

12. One of the residents at Roxby Court has a hearing impairment. The residents wanted to be able to communicate with this resident, so they sought funding from the Community Fund to learn some basic sign language. A successful course was provided by MeSign.

Red Hall

New Community Group

13. A new community group has been established on Red Hall to replace the Friends of Red Hall Group who have disbanded. Their first activity was a Community Litter Pick on 17 February which 65 people attended, comprising 34 children and 31

adults. They collected an impressive 62 bags of rubbish and a mix of larger items.

14. Residents now want to take a more proactive approach. The children have made posters and written letters to encourage the perpetrators not to drop their litter, especially in areas where the litter levels were particularly high. The group has also met with the local Police Officer, PCSOs and the Council's Community Safety Team to look at tackling the issues long term.
15. The Group has already planned their next activity which will be an Easter celebration including an Easter Egg Hunt.

Stockton International Riverside Festival (SIRF)

16. The SIRF team had previously worked with the Friends of Red Hall Group and will continue to work with the new Red Hall Partnership Group engaging residents in community activities until August 2019. The Group was asked to decide whether it would prefer a large Easter performance and workshops or a series of weekly workshops with the opportunity to take part in the actual SIRF in August. The Group opted for the latter option as it felt a series of workshops would provide more provision and a longer-term goal of taking part in the Festival.
17. In addition, the SIRF team provided a full day of workshops in Red Hall Primary School on 15 March where the children had the opportunity to enjoy a performance by circus performers and Back Chat Brass, as well as trying workshops of circus skills and brass instrument playing. This will be running on a carousel basis as all the children will have the chance to try both workshop.

Theatre Tickets – 'A Place for All'

18. 40 residents from Red Hall will have the opportunity to enjoy a visit to the Hippodrome through a new programme named 'A Place for All' providing a chance for everyone to visit the Theatre. After discussing this initiative with the Red Hall Partnership Group, it became very apparent how difficult it is for the families living on Red Hall to access the Theatre with the main barrier being the actual cost of the tickets. This will create an opportunity for whole families to attend together and enjoy a full theatre experience.

Food for Thought

19. Food for Thought has run half day cooking sessions (from 15 March for eight weeks at the Community Centre. Making use of food that would be otherwise thrown away by the supermarkets. Funding for additional cooking and storage equipment that will be needed has come from Keepmoat and Healthy New Towns. As well as showing people how to cook cheap healthy meals it is hoped that this will help establish a Food for Thought group in Red Hall.

Fairer, Richer, Red Hall

20. The Red Hall Liaison Group that was established to coordinate activity between various agencies as part of the regeneration of Red Hall has reviewed its future role in light of the completion of the regeneration work in Red Hall and the end of the Healthy New Towns project. At a recent meeting it was agreed that in future the Group will operate as part of the Fairer, Richer Darlington initiative.

Autism Friendly Town

21. I have been working with the North East Autism Society to make Darlington an Autism Friendly Town. Following on from the work started By Cllr Sue Richmond and the Cornmill Centre, the concept of a Quiet Hour provided by town centre retailers has now been adopted by over 20 businesses in addition to those in the Cornmill Centre.
22. The bid to become an Autism Friendly Town was launched on 12 March at Crown Street Library. This coincided with the World Book day activities. Local Author Peter Barron gave a book reading to children, supported by his book illustrator Jonathon Raiseborough. Jonathon is a hugely talented artist. He is autistic and he is doing great work as an ambassador for the North East Autism Society and speaker for Autism Awareness.
23. In partnership with the North East Autism Society we will now look to provide autism training to key front line staff from both the council and partner organisations. I am chairing a working group to help coordinate the activity.
24. On 6 April the Town Clock and the Hippodrome were lit up in Gold to mark World Autism Day.

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