

**DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

**At a Meeting** of the **Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee** held at the County Hall, Durham on **Monday 10 December 2007** at **9.30 a.m.**

**COUNCILLOR N WADE** in the Chair.

**Durham County Council**

Councillors Armstrong, Bell, Chaplow, Davies, E Foster, Porter, Priestley, Simmons, Stradling and walker.

**Chester le Street District Council**

Councillor Harrison

**Derwentside District Council**

Councillor Lavin

**Easington District Council**

Councillor Williams

**Teesdale District Council**

Councillor Cooke

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G Armstrong, Agnew, Campbell and A Gray.

**A1 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**A2 Health Improvement Strategy 2007-2012**

The Sub Committee considered the draft Health Improvement Strategy 2007-2012 (for copy see file of Minutes).

The plan describes the contribution that the County Council makes to improving the health of the people of County Durham and to tackling health inequalities.

The Sub Committee discussed the issues within the plan and made the following comments for each issue:

**Children and Young People**

- School governors have an important role through their Healthy Schools Activities to ensure children are able to make informed choices. Sex education needs to be provided at an early age.
- The County Council needs to be part of a campaign focussed on social marketing aimed at young people.
- Needs to be better facilities at schools to encourage children to participate in physical activity – i.e. more showers.

- Whilst educational attainment is an indicator of better health it does not necessarily equip all young people to deal with life's pressures.
- Delivery of priorities – better co-ordination of policies between public bodies is needed if they are to deliver improvements.
- Education needs to begin at home with the parents.

#### **Tobacco Control**

- Emphasis needs to be on prevention rather than on cessation.
- Need to use Countywide magazine to publicise the successes of the test purchase scheme operated by Trading Standards.
- Outline successes of the County Councils smoking cessation programme for staff.
- More emphasis on education in schools together with family support strategies.
- Adapt and adopt regional initiatives such as 'FRESH' using social marketing to get the message across.

#### **Tackling Obesity**

- Need to integrate guided walks into out of school activities as a way to encourage children to participate in healthy activity.
- Surestart should be universally provided across the County. There is a need to evaluate its success.
- Provide a free school meal for all school children.
- Encourage parents and children to walk to school.

#### **Alcohol and Substance Misuse**

- Include a performance measure of violence against County Council staff where drugs and alcohol misuse is a factor.
- Reduce the strength of alcoholic drinks
- Reduce the availability of alcohol – the County Council has an important lobbying role.
- Policies and services of public bodies need to be better co-ordinated.
- Awareness training should be provided to licensees.

#### **Mental Health and Well being**

- There needs to be a clearer focus on staff well being, particularly in relation to the stress element of sickness absence.
- There is no Local Implementation Team in Easington following the structural changes in mental health services. Need to consider partnership arrangements for mental health.

#### **Adults with a variety of care and support needs and carers**

- In comparison to women's issues there is not enough awareness of men's health needs and men's cancers. Additional awareness training in these areas needs to be provided and specifically in relation to prostate cancer. An offer of support in this area has been made.
- In relation to the over 50's there needs to be further emphasis on living healthier independent and longer lives as an objective.
- Additional emphasis needs to be made about the work of carers and particularly issues in relation to financial support.

### **Health Inequalities**

- Issues such as domestic violence, access to services, welfare rights etc need to be cross referenced to health services.

### **Cross cutting Issues**

- Other public bodies and agencies other than the County Council will be responsible for making the improvements and LAA's are needed to bind all partners into working together to achieve the improvements in health.

The Head of Social Inclusion explained that consultation on the plan will continue until the end of January 2008. All comments will be considered and a final version of the plan will be produced by the end of March 2008.

Members of the Sub Committee asked that copies of the plan be distributed to Town and Parish Councils as part of the consultation process.

The Head of Overview and Scrutiny explained that there are a number of factors to be taken into consideration. There needs to be an emphasis on delivery and it needs to be noted that this is a long term agenda. There will be opportunities under the new local government arrangements and this work will need to be embedded into the work of the new council.

He further stated that there are six key areas which were identified during the course of discussion:

- The County Council has significant role to play in a community leadership role. This will include lobbying, influencing, enforcing legislation, challenging where it is not delivering services, raising awareness and championing this agenda.
- Under the new local government arrangements housing and leisure will need to be reflected in the document. This is in addition to the areas identified in the earlier discussion.
- Partnerships – the need for a more joined up approach to tackling this agenda. How do we target support for families to deal with issues such as obesity, alcohol/substance misuse, teenage pregnancy etc.
- A performance framework is needed. Without benchmarks and performance indicators we will be unable monitor progress. These need to be cross referenced to other areas such as domestic violence and children and young people etc.
- It is suggested that the County Council support Stafford Scholes through its occupational health service to help raise awareness on prostate cancer. In addition through District Councils will support awareness training for licensees.

### **Resolved:**

That the Health Improvement Strategy be noted and that the comments set out above be submitted as the Health Scrutiny Sub Committees response to the consultation.