

Health and Wellbeing Board

25 September 2023

County Durham Together



Report of Jane Robinson, Corporate Director of Adult and Health Services, DCC

Amanda Healy, Director of Public Health, DCC

Councillor Chris Hood, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Adult and Health Services

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To update the Health and Wellbeing Board on the developments of County Durham Together.
- 2 The report also enlists the support of the members of the Health and Wellbeing Board to work towards the County Durham Together ambitions in the work they do collectively and as individual partners.

Executive summary

- 3 County Durham Together has been reviewed and refreshed with a new vision to work with communities, especially those most in need, making sure they are at the heart of decision making, building on their existing skills, knowledge, experience and resources to support everyone to thrive and to live happy, healthy and connected lives.
- 4 There are a number of ambitions underpinned by the County Durham Approach to Wellbeing, which the Health and Wellbeing Board has already adopted, and workstream groups which are in the process of being established to achieve the ambitions.

- 5 County Durham Together will support the Health and Wellbeing Board by developing and providing “the tools” to help implement the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JLHWS) strategic approach. The CDT Partnership can also act as a critical friend for strategies, policies and initiatives facilitated by the Board. CDT can also support the development of the Approach to Wellbeing as an assurance framework for the work of the Board.
- 6 County Durham Together will not be able to achieve its ambitions in isolation. County Durham Together asks that all partners and partnerships embody the ethos and values of County Durham Together in the work that they do individually and collectively. By doing so, both partnerships will be able to achieve their ambitions together.

Recommendation(s)

- 7 Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to:
 - (a) Note the contents of the report,
 - (b) Support and champion the developments of County Durham Together and recognise how the approach can support the Health and Wellbeing Board to attain its priorities,
 - (c) Agree to the further development of the County Durham Approach to Wellbeing as an assurance tool for the Health and Wellbeing Board and its composite organisations to use in day-to-day work.

Background

- 8 The County Durham Together Partnership was originally established in 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the time, its main purpose was to retain the learning from the pandemic and to build on the work of the Prevention Steering Group.
- 9 We have recently reviewed and refreshed County Durham Together taking into consideration the current and future challenges faced by communities and organisations across County Durham. This review and refresh has given us opportunity to move towards new and different ways of working across the county with a more community centred focus which, evidence shows, is an important element in helping to reduce the persistent and worsening health inequalities we see in County Durham.

Vision and ambitions

- 10 County Durham Together is about working with communities, especially those most in need, making sure they are at the heart of decision making, building on their existing skills, knowledge, experience and resources to support everyone to thrive and to live happy, healthy and connected lives.
- 11 Underpinning the vision are several ambitions founded on the County Durham Approach to Wellbeing:
- 12 Working better together

To understand opportunities for:

- joining up data and intelligence to better understand and respond to local needs,
- pooling resources and joint commissioning,
- identifying and maximising the impact of existing assets and resources while reducing duplication,
- streamlining pathways “step up and step down” of support,
- streamlining community engagement, participation, and involvement,
- securing a more sustainable voluntary and community sector.

13 Doing with not to/Sharing Decision Making

- Changing our relationship with communities to ensure they have a more equal voice in decisions that affect them, and greater say over the design of policies, services and initiatives.

14 Being Asset Focussed

- Proportionately targeting our collective resources to the people and communities that need them the most, building on existing community assets and resources,
- Considering the economic, environmental, and social aspects of our impact on communities to boost social value and build community wealth,
- Working with statutory services to develop strength and asset-based approaches to working with communities.

15 Empowering our communities

- Ensuring that they have up to date information to help themselves and each other,
- Ensuring that the voice of County Durham is heard in regional forums including new and emerging forums such as the Integrated Care Board,
- Ensure that people living in vulnerable circumstances are protected.

16 Building resilience

- Work with services and communities to raise awareness of issues such as domestic abuse, debt, social isolation and loneliness to equip people to recognise where people need help at early stages and know where to access the support they need,
- Develop a skilled and sustainable workforce (including the voluntary workforce) who are able to meet the needs of residents at the first point of contact and triage into statutory services swiftly as required,
- Improve pathways between communities, voluntary and community sector and public sector services to connect people to help and support people at the earliest opportunity so they access support which builds resilience and self-reliance and prevents the need for crisis intervention.

- 17 To facilitate achieving the ambitions, a number of workstreams are beginning to be established (see governance below).

Governance

- 18 County Durham Together is accountable to the County Durham Partnership and sits alongside the other partnerships. County Durham Together is an enabler to help all partnerships and organisations to achieve their own ambitions by becoming more community focussed, building on assets and improving the involvement of communities in decision making.
- 19 The Partnership meets on a bi-monthly basis and is chaired by Jane Robinson, Director of Adult and Health Services. The vice-chair is Amanda Healy, Director of Public Health and there are representatives from many partners including County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service, Durham Constabulary, Durham Community Action, Karbon Homes (as a representative from the housing sector) and Durham University.
- 20 A multi-agency steering group was established in August 2023 to drive forward the work of County Durham Together and is in the process of finalising its terms of reference and developing an action plan.
- 21 There are several new workstreams which are in the process of development to facilitate the attainment of the County Durham Together ambitions:
- Integrated Co-production, Community Engagement, Involvement and Participation
 - Digital Inclusion including Community Book
 - Community Connectors including Skills & Competencies
- 22 Rather than create new workstreams, the work of County Durham Together will be incorporated into the existing Joint Strategic Needs and Asset Assessment and Resilient Communities Groups.
- 23 There is a need to review how County Durham Together translates into “place” and make a discernible difference for communities. Taking into account the various different elements of transformation already underway such as mental health hubs, local networks and integrated neighbourhood teams, creating another competing system is not recommended. Instead, County Durham Together will seek to influence the existing developments and endeavour to join up where possible and practical.

Conclusion

- 24 Empowering individuals and communities are essential ingredients in addressing preventable and unfair differences that drive health inequalities, poor health, and health behaviours.
- 25 County Durham Together provides an opportunity for the Health and Wellbeing Board and its constituent partners to move further towards implementation of the Approach to Wellbeing to create conditions where individuals and communities have greater control over their lives, can define and develop local solutions to local problems and be part of making decisions where they are affected.
- 26 The changes for communities through County Durham Together are unlikely to change immediately and be highly visible but will be incremental over a period of time. The ambitions of County Durham Together will not be realised unless all partnerships and partners are committed to embodying the values and ethos behind the ambitions.

Background papers

- None

Other useful documents

- Presentation to Strategic CMT/Cabinet April 2023

Author

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

County Durham Together, through implementation of its ambitions, will support the Health and Wellbeing Board's statutory responsibility of promoting greater integration and partnership between bodies from the NHS, public health and local government

Finance

Non-cashable efficiency savings will be made through the joining up of structures and processes.

Consultation

Extensive engagement has been undertaken with strategic partners in the review process and in the development of the vision and ambitions.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

County Durham Together will advocate for people, including those with protected characteristics, to be involved in decisions that affect them

Climate Change

No adverse impacts

Human Rights

No adverse impacts

Crime and Disorder

More community centred approaches and involvement of communities in the problem solving and decision-making processes should positively impact on crime and disorder.

Staffing

No implications identified.

Accommodation

No implications identified.

Risk

Culture change

Procurement

Social value and community wealth building will be promoted as part of County Durham Together.