

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Health and Wellbeing Board** held in **Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham** on **Wednesday 22 November 2023** at **9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor C Hood (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors R Bell and T Henderson; and N Appleby, S Burns, C Cunnington-Shore, G Curry, A Healy, J Robinson, M Graham, F Jassat, M Laing, M Pearson and M Smith

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from K Burrows, Dr J Carlton, Prof C Clarke, D Gallagher, L Hall, P Innes, S Jacques, J Pearce, A Petty, L Robertson and L Taylor.

2 Substitute Members

There were the following Substitute Members: N Appleby for A Petty; S Burns for D Gallagher; G Curry for S Jacques; M Pearson for P Innes; and M Smith for L Hall.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

4 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held 25 September 2023 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The Interim Strategic Manager – Partnerships, J Bradbrook noted that the new Chief Constable, Ms Rachel Bacon, was now in post with Durham Constabulary and she would be invited to become a member of the Board. She added that alternative venues for meetings of the Board were being looked at for the future.

5 Director of Public Health Annual Report 2023

The Board received an update presentation from the Director of Public Health, Amanda Healy on her Director of Public Health Annual Report 2023 (for copy see file of minutes).

The Director of Public Health reminded the Board that the production and publication of an Annual Report was a requirement for Councils and that 2023 represented 10 years of Public Health within Local Authorities. It was explained that the Report linked to the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JLHWS) with the influences on health and wellbeing, health and social care, healthy behaviours and the wider determinants of health. It was added that the report also provided an update on the work that had taken place to address the four priorities in the JLHWS: making smoking history; enabling healthy weight for all; improving mental health, resilience, and wellbeing; and reducing alcohol harms.

Councillor R Bell noted the work and progress over the last 10 years and asked as regards future challenges. The Director of Public Health noted the four JLHWS priorities, noting that while some changes may provide some quick wins, other areas would be longer term.

Councillor T Henderson asked what partners could do to help ensure there was a continuous concerted commitment by all to improve health and reduce health inequalities. The Director of Public Health noted partners were actively engaged through many mechanisms, including consultation such as “stopping the start”. She added that the meetings of the Board also provided the opportunity for partners to hold each other to account. She added as an example, the work in relation to 0-25 SEN with partners.

F Jassat congratulated the Director of Public Health and her Team for all their work over the last 10 years, not least in respect of their work during the COVID-19 pandemic. He added that leadership and partners should focus on social determinants and support should be sustained. The Chair added that it was also important to remember the work that was done in our communities with people at the local level that makes an impact on health and wellbeing. The Director of Public Health noted evidence showed that when work was done hand in hand with people, this led to better outcomes. She added this was a challenge and noted the good work referred to within her report relating to the Family Hubs, working with Children and Young People’s Services and the Parent Panel to co-produce, working to best benefit local communities. The Corporate Director of Adult and Health Services, Jane Robinson noted the County Durham Partnership event which saw the relaunch of the County Durham Community Champions to help get those key messages out into our communities.

Resolved:

That the Director of Public Health Annual Report 2023 be noted.

6 Review of Healthy Weight Approaches in County Durham

The Board received an update presentation from the Public Health Strategic Manager, Mick Shannon on the review of healthy weight approaches in County Durham (for copy see file of minutes).

The Public Health Strategic Manager noted the importance of people moving and considering how much they eat. He acknowledged the impact of the pandemic on people's behaviours. He asked the Board for their thoughts on what they felt were key contributors to obesity. Responses from the Board included: lifestyle choices; mental health issues; temptation from junk food; impact or side effects from medication or accidents; busy lifestyles; sedentary work and hobbies, such as working at a computer, playing computer games; cost of living impact; cost of access to some exercise; environment; and lack of cheap healthy food options.

The Public Health Strategic Manager noted issues that impacted included mental health and explained as regards food architecture and marketing and explained as regards evidence of pre-natal health issues, such as being overweight or smoking, having an impact on. He explained as regards the change from the early part of the twentieth century, where the focus had been on tackling malnutrition, most often associated with poverty and the establishment of the welfare state. He noted that now, those deprived areas were those suffering with the higher prevalence of obesity, with links to cheaper foods often being unhealthy and less nutritious.

The Public Health Strategic Manager noted the Healthy Weight Alliance met four times a year, with a significant amount of work having been carried out with local assets and key collaborators. He noted mapping exercises and agreement to act across key partners. He noted the example of the impact of hot foot takeaways, with 40 percent of children in County Durham leaving primary school overweight, and with 75 percent of adults being overweight. He noted the impact of salt, with reduction in salt helping to reduce high blood pressure and associated impacts such as coronary heart disease.

The Public Health Strategic Manager explained noted that assessment of the impact of any work was evidence based, looking at key areas: systems leadership; long term systems approach; health promoting environment; community engagement; focus on inequalities; life course approach; monitoring, evidence, evaluation and innovation.

The Public Health Strategic Manager asked how the Board could help support healthy weight key priorities.

The Director of Public Health noted the Healthy Weight Declaration, with the Board signing up to the declaration. The Head of Integrated Commissioning, Sarah Burns noted that continuing to work together in partnership was important, so each organisation can influence where it can, for example the Council being able to look at issues such as planning and leisure provision. She noted the excellent work of School Sports Champions in encouraging young people to move more. The Senior Policy Officer, Steph Rich noted the importance of recognising that working across County Durham meant working in many different types of areas, noting that for example, those living in rural areas were more reliant on private motor vehicles and would need to travel further to access facilities. She added it was important to use local knowledge of communities within the County and asked what metrics were used to measure healthy weight, such as BMI or calorific intake. The Public Health Strategic Manager noted that there was positive engagement within our local communities and that BMI was used as a metric, although other data, such as waist size were important.

The Corporate Director of Adult and Health Services asked if there was a checklist associated with the Healthy Weight Declaration, in terms of organisations signing up. The Public Health Strategic Manager noted this would be discussed at an upcoming meeting of County Durham Together, with the key being in providing impact. He added that the NHS had done a lot of work in County Durham in this regard, and actions included taking breaks, fresh air and nutritious food.

M Graham noted that Childrens and Young People's Services operated different models in different areas and asked if other Local Authorities' approaches had been looked at. The Public Health Strategic Manager noted that the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities had shared ideas such as healthy activity strategy.

The Head of Partnerships and Community Engagement noted the work in terms of a "healthy start to life" what is included in the school curriculum and activities such as after school cooking clubs. He noted that the 'healthy weight lens' should be applied to what we do, for example where warm spaces are being provided for those in need, is the food provision healthy and appropriate. The Public Health Strategic Manager noted that working together to promote healthy weight was a challenge and included promotion of what was healthy in terms of levels of salt, fat and sugar. The Senior Policy Officer noted that it was important to educate children in terms of being more active, however, there were factors to consider such as safety, especially when exercising outside in winter months.

Councillor R Bell asked as regards national policies in relation to volume promotions of foods high in salt and sugar. The Public Health Strategic Manager noted the ban on the promotion of food high in fat, salt and sugar had been due to come into effect from October 2023, however, that had been pushed back to October 2025.

Councillor T Henderson asked as regards the links between poor mental health and unhealthy weight. The Public Health Strategic Manager noted that unhealthy weight could impact upon mental health and vice-versa. He noted a lot of work with colleagues from Primary Care in developing a toolkit in relation to help identify and have conversations with those individuals where there could be those links. Councillor T Henderson asked as regards the provision of healthy school meals. The Public Health Strategic Manager noted discussions in relation to supporting schools in terms of linking with suppliers of nutritious foods, and in encouraging healthy options. Councillor R Bell asked if there were any differences in terms of Local Authority controlled schools and those that had become Academies. The Public Health Strategic Manager noted he could find out.

M Pearson, County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service noted that it was important to look at physical exercise and living a balanced lifestyle. He noted that viewing unhealthy food as a treat, taken in moderation, was important and noted the impact and influence that sports stars could have in terms of being role models for young people and that there could be opportunities to link in with schools in that regard. The Public Health Strategic Manager noted that exercise was very important, and that Government had allocated £320 million for sports within schools. He agreed that it could be beneficial for County Durham to utilise its sports personalities, noted that Firefighters from the County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service were very fit and represented good role models in that regard. He noted the “Active 30” for children, with children to have 30 minutes of physical activity at school, 30 minutes “at home”.

The Director of Public Health noted that there were no easy answers and that it was important to look to partners to see if anyone was being missed. She added it was important to embed healthy approaches internally and the commitment of the Health and Wellbeing Board was important in tackling this complex issue.

Resolved:

- (i) That the findings of the review be noted;
- (ii) That the Board endorse the recommendations for action and approve progress to the delivery stage.

7a Annual Housing and Health Update

The Board received an update presentation from the Housing Manager, Marie Smith on Housing and Health (for copy see file of minutes).

The Housing Manager noted that over 2022/23 Housing Solutions had delivered against the former Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS) priorities of starting well, living well and aging well. The board noted elements for starting well included adaptations for children, target hardening, a young person's joint protocol. It was noted elements relating to living well included: disabled adaptations grants, fuel poverty, selective licensing, rough sleeping, resettlement of refugees and supported housing. In terms of aging well, it was noted there had been work undertaken in relation to the Council's new build programme, new housing for older people and a needs-based Accommodation Programme Board. She explained that housing was a key determinant to health and wellbeing and that access to housing, improving housing and the home environment were key to improving health outcomes for individuals, families and the elderly. She concluded by noting that Housing Solutions have delivered a number of key projects to assist with improving the health of the population of County Durham and that future annual updates would align to the new JLHWS 2023-28.

Resolved:

That the report and presentation be noted.

7b & Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Draft County 7c Durham Housing Strategy

The Board received an update presentation from the Housing Manager and Senior Policy Officer in relation to homelessness and rough sleeping and the draft County Durham Housing Strategy (for copy see file of minutes).

The Senior Policy Officer noted the consultation on the Principles and Priorities Paper that had taken place June through to August 2023, with feedback informing the draft strategy which would be consulted upon 30 October through to 18 December 2023. She noted that following feedback, and any appropriate changes, the finalised strategy would be adopted in Spring 2024.

Members of the Board noted that the Housing Strategy Vision was that: *'By 2035 County Durham will be a place that has good quality homes that meet the needs of existing and future residents that they can afford. The provision and quality of housing will support economic growth, contribute to improved health, and create and maintain sustainable, mixed and balanced communities. People will live long and independent lives within connected communities'*.

The Senior Policy Officer noted the updated and amended principles and priorities, as set out within the presentation, with additional focus on community safety, sustainable and safe communities, supporting health and wellbeing, energy efficiency and creating safe, accessible, prosperous and sustainable places to live.

The Housing Manager reminded the Board that it was a statutory requirement for Local Authorities to produce a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and noted that the new draft strategy differed from previous strategies in that there was a more detailed evidence base to inform the strategy, as well as including a review of the housing needs across a range of cohorts to identify gaps and service offer. She added that it was clear which landlords needed to be engaged with to assist in homeless prevention and access to the supply of accommodation. She noted key points to note were that around 7,500 people contact the housing service each year claiming homelessness, and of which 2,500 were accepted as being homeless, in line with legislation. She added that the main reasons for homelessness were end of private rented tenancy, domestic abuse and parent/friends no longer willing to accommodate.

The Housing Manager noted that the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy priorities were to:

1. Prevent people becoming homeless
2. Improve access to and supply accommodation
3. Ensure the appropriate support is available for people who are homeless (work with partners to build resilience in people)
4. Reduce rough sleeping

The Housing Manager noted the next steps, in terms of the ongoing consultation through to 18 December, with final approval in March 2024, the establishment of a Homelessness Forum and development of a delivery plan.

Councillor R Bell noted that the County Durham Housing Strategy was being developed to consider housing issues across County Durham and asked how confident Officers were that relevant partners were engaged in the process and would help us to understand, identify and promote local solutions underpinned by community engagement.

The Housing Manager noted that the consultation was conducted by the Council's Consultation Team and that there had been many presentations with partners such as Housing Providers, Private Landlords, Health and Social Care colleagues, the Department for Work and Pensions, and out at the Area Action Partnerships (AAPs). She noted that all relevant partners were being engaged, with Housing Solutions looking to how the strategy would be delivered.

Councillor T Henderson asked what support was available prior to people prior to them becoming homeless. The Housing Manager noted two sets of circumstance, those with no roof over their head, and those threatened with homelessness. She added that partners had committed to refer issues to Housing Solutions as soon as possible to help prevent any evictions.

F Jassat noted that those dealing with housing benefits could be placed to provide an early intervention offer, noting the welfare reform changes over the last 10 years and the move to Universal Credit and that the upcoming statement from the Chancellor of the Exchequer may be informative. The Housing Manager noted involvement where there was top-up or enhanced housing benefit for specialist provision, however, reiterated the close work with the Revenue and Benefits Section at the Council.

N Appleby, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner noted that the PCC worked in partnership to tackle issues such as drug and substance misuse, including with the Criminal Justice Board, and noted work with ex-offenders to help them stay away from temptation and to help them maintain their tenancies. The Housing Manager noted the work via the Safe Durham Partnership Board and of delivery plans to be in place for each cohort, including ex-offenders. N Appleby welcomed the opportunity for the OPCC to feed into the consultation process.

The Director of Public Health welcomed the new draft strategy and the links to the new JLHWS. The Chair noted the importance of embedding the health and wellbeing approach within housing and the successes in Durham with the Council and Partners. The Housing Manager noted the work with colleagues from Public Health in that regard, noting how that impacted individual strands, such as homelessness, could be shared with the Board. The Senior Policy Officer added that the wellbeing model was at the pilot stage, and relevant information and slides could be shared.

Resolved:

- (i) That the overview of the consultation on the Principles and Priorities Paper be noted;

- (ii) That the content of the Draft County Durham Housing Strategy be noted, and for any feedback or comments to be provided before the end of the consultation period.

7d Update on Regional Housing Work

The Corporate Director of Adult and Health Services gave a verbal update in respect of ongoing regional work relating to housing.

She explained as regards the work via the Association of Directors of Adult Services (ADAS), explaining she was the Lead Director for the Region, and the work as a result of the Care Act and links to the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB). She noted topics included partnership working, co-production, developing programmes of investment, opportunity and new models for housing. She noted the Northern Housing Consortium conference in June that had looked at key areas such as decent warm and dry homes and those with complex needs.

Resolved:

That the verbal update be noted.

C Curry left the meeting at 11.10am

8 Winter Planning

The Director of Integrated Community Services, and Vice-Chair to the Board, M Laing gave an update presentation on winter planning arrangements and preparedness (for copy see file of minutes).

The Board noted as regards lessons learned from last winter, noting that while COVID cases had been far fewer, there had been wider 'spikes' in demand. The Director of Integrated Community Services noted priority areas for 2023-24 included: government directives; Accident and Emergency waiting times; hospital discharge; funding; and managing pressures together with system leadership via the Local Accident and Emergency Delivery Board.

The Interim Strategic Manager – Partnerships suggested that 'workforce' was the topic for the upcoming Health and Wellbeing Board development session scheduled for 27 February 2024, the Board agreed.

Councillor R Bell asked what work could be done to prevent people presenting at Primary Care. The Director of Public Health noted that planning groups were multiagency and noted the example of 'welcome spaces', an extension of 'warm spaces' and that data had shown where the most at risk were and that targeting those who were at greater risk in winter was important. She added that County Durham Together looked at how the community could support each other, working with AAPs and included working alongside local and national campaigns. The Director of Integrated Community Services noted work to support carers, the work of Age UK County Durham in supporting communities, providing wellbeing checks, hot meals and encouraging people to be good neighbours. He noted the invaluable work of the community and voluntary sector within County Durham in the work that they do to support our communities.

Councillor T Henderson asked what partners could do to support the winter pressure plans. The Director of Integrated Community Services noted that it was important that partners were involved in the planning and, while executing the winter plan, remained flexible to meet any challenges. He added that it was important to focus on the most vulnerable, with the majority being older people on their own in their own homes. He added that it was always important to communicate to people to help them to have patience and understanding where waiting time increase due to the winter pressures. He noted that patients were seen in order of need and that alternatives, such as community pharmacies, were often quicky for those who were not so ill.

The Chair noted the changes to community pharmacy opening hours and asked if this had impacted on the numbers presenting to Accident and Emergency. The Director of Integrated Community Services noted that the impact was not yet known, however, noted that in rural areas and areas with poor public transport, pharmacies were often relied upon in helping reduce demand on Primary Care.

Resolved:

That the presentation be noted.

9 County Durham Sexual Health Strategy

The Board received a report and presentation from the Public Health Practitioner, Lucy Wilkins on the County Durham Sexual Health Strategy (CDSHS) (for copy see file of minutes).

The Board were reminded that the Health and Social Care Act 2012 mandated Local Authorities to commission a range of open access, sexual health services to meet the needs of their local population. The Public Health Practitioner noted the CDSHS met this requirement and set out a range of ambitions aimed at improving people's sexual health and reducing health inequalities in County Durham. She added that the strategy had been subject to a six-week consultation, which had informed the development of the following five priority areas and the ambitions:

1. Relationships Education, Relationships, Sex and Health Education across the lifecourse
2. Teenage conceptions, pregnancy and support for young parents
3. Contraception
4. Sexually Transmitted Infections and HIV
5. Reproductive health

It was noted the next steps were to develop a multi-agency implementation plan, to continue to utilise the Approach to Wellbeing, to regularly review progress and to report annually on the CDSHS.

The Director of Public Health thanked the Public Health Practitioner and all those who had worked in the CDSHS for their excellent work.

Councillor T Henderson asked if we received any objections to the delivery of this topic in primary, and secondary schools. The Public Health Practitioner noted the work of the Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Network to help equip those in schools to be able to explain the rationale behind the education being provided, so that parents can understand the approach. She added that it was about safe and healthy relationships, to help provide information for schools and to normalise the language around the topic.

M Graham noted that most parents would read 'RE' as religious education, and consistency to use RHE or RSHE to differentiate would be important.

The Corporate Director of Adult and Health Services noted this first CDSHS was very accessible and added her thanks to those of the Director of Public Health to the team for all their hard work. The Public Health Practitioner noted that a lot of work had been undertaken with young people to ensure the language used was that which young people would actually use and understand.

Resolved:

- (i) That the report and presentation be noted;
- (ii) That the Board ratify the County Durham Sexual Health Strategy 2023 – 2028.

10 Water Fluoridation

The Director of Public Health gave a verbal update in relation to water fluoridation. She noted that the Oral Health Strategy was one that was considered by the Health and Wellbeing Board, as well as Overview and Scrutiny, and the commitment to water fluoridation was set out within the strategy. She noted changes since the pandemic in terms of the Secretary of State, however, reiterated that Government still supported water fluoridation, especially in the North East, as a complimentary strategy, with a 12-week consultation due to commence before the end of 2023, with implementation in 2024.

Councillor R Bell asked as regards any updates from Government, with the Director of Public Health noting that the Department of Health had representation on our Regional Group looking at the issue so we would be receiving information in that regard.

Resolved:

That the verbal update be noted.

11 'Stopping the Start - a plan to create a smokefree generation'

The Director of Public Health presented a report relating to the new plan launched by the Department of Health and Social Care on 12 October 2023 'Stopping the Start - a plan to create a smokefree generation'. She noted that new legislation was being consulted in this regard, including on issues such as youth vaping.

The Chair noted that tobacco control is one of the four key priorities of the Health and Wellbeing Board and asked what we do practically in this regard. The Director of Public Health noted the strength of our Tobacco Alliance and the work of NHS Partners and the community and voluntary sector. She reminded the Board of the video presented at the last meeting, where County Councillor C Hunt spoke about her experiences with illness as a result of smoking.

She noted the pooling of resources through FRESH and the ability of Local Authorities and the ICB to also pool resources in terms of campaigns, such as reducing smoking during pregnancy which remained a key challenge.

Resolved:

- (i) That the report be noted;
- (ii) That the Board endorse the proposals highlighted within the DHSC as a plan for Stopping the Start – planning for a Smokefree generation;
- (iii) That the Board support the roll-out of the consultation process across the system to ensure the voice of smokers, ex-smokers, professionals, young people and their families are heard in relation to the proposed legislation.

Councillor R Bell left the meeting at 11.50am

12 Better Care Fund, Quarter 2 Submission

Director of Integrated Community Services noted the Better Care Fund, Quarter 2 Submission, noting delegated authority was being sought for the Chair and Vice-Chair to sign off the submission in due course.

Resolved:

- (i) That the contents of this report, and the Quarter 2 BCF submission, which was submitted to NHS England on 31 October 2023 (Appendix 2) be noted;
- (ii) That delegated authority be given to the Chair and Vice-Chair on behalf of the Health and Wellbeing Board for the agreement of future Better Care Fund submissions required by NHS England;
- (iii) That Better Care Fund performance updates at Health and Wellbeing Board be received at future meetings for information.

13 Integrated Care Programme - Workforce Development Programme Update

Director of Integrated Community Services noted the report was attached to the agenda papers for Board Members' information.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

14 Health and Wellbeing Board Campaigns

The Board noted a presentation from the Director of Public Health on the following public health campaigns (for copy of presentation see file of minutes). The Board noted that questions could be directed to the Director of Public Health should any members require additional information on the key campaigns.

Resolved:

That the information contained within the presentation be noted

15 Climate Emergency Plan

The Interim Strategic Manager – Partnerships noted that, as previously discussed, there was ongoing consultation as regards the Climate Emergency Plan 2024-27 and Board Members would be provided with the link to be able to respond.