

HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL - comments on Health and Wellbeing Board structures and Health and Wellbeing Strategy - 13th September 2012

This email is sent on behalf of Cllr Eddie Dryden (Chair), Cllr Len Junier (Vice Chair) and the membership of the Health Scrutiny Panel.

I refer to the Health Scrutiny Panel that you attended on 13th September 2012. Following the meeting and subsequent discussions amongst Members, the Panel would like to submit the following text outlining its views on what was discussed at the meeting. Should you have any questions, please feel free to get in touch.

1. The Panel remains to be convinced that the Health & Wellbeing Board and its associated support structures, pays sufficient attention to the social determinants of health outcomes. The Panel is well aware that reference is made to the subject in the structures diagram, although the Panel has received insufficient assurance that there will be a part, or a member, of the Health & Wellbeing Board whose main function will be to pay attention to, and advocate for, such matters as increasing the average household income and the overall economic picture in Middlesbrough at any one time. The Panel would like to see the Shadow Health & Wellbeing Board develop a method of ensuring that the social determinants on health play a fuller role in the Board's work.
2. The Panel would like more detail about how the Health & Wellbeing Board will go about ensuring that the local community has affordable access to leisure and sports facilities. Particularly in times of financial stress, one of the options considered is to increase charges for using facilities at leisure centres. The Panel would argue that there is a political debate to be had about what the local authority thinks leisure centres should be and what they are there to do.
3. The Panel would like to receive further information about how the Health & Wellbeing Board will go about ensuring that the BME community is sufficiently involved and consulted when the Health & Wellbeing Board is carrying out its role. The Panel considers that this point is important for two particular reasons. Firstly, the Panel has consistently received evidence from health professionals regarding the lower accessing of health services by members of the BME community. Secondly, Middlesbrough has a relatively large South Asian community and people of a South Asian heritage have a specific increased risk of some conditions such as Diabetes and CVD. As such, it is of great importance that the Health & Wellbeing Board has a detailed understanding of the needs of that community, which it can then plan for.
4. The Panel would like to receive a subsequent paper on how the Health & Wellbeing Board will go about ensuring adequate representation from the local voluntary & community sector.
5. The Panel would like to receive a subsequent paper on how the Health & Wellbeing Board will go about engaging with local communities, to influence it in its work.