
HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL

A meeting of the Health Scrutiny Panel was held on 15 July 2004.

PRESENT: Councillor Dryden (Chair), Councillors Biswas, McIntyre and Mrs H Pearson.

OFFICIALS: J Bennington and P Clark.

**** PRESENT BY INVITATION:** The Mayor (R Mallon).

**** PRESENT AS AN OBSERVER:** Councillor Carr.

**** AN APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE** was submitted on behalf of Councillor Lancaster.

**** DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made at this point of the meeting.

**** MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Health Scrutiny Panel held on 2 June 2004 were submitted and approved.

HEALTHY LIVING REVIEW

The Senior Scrutiny Officer submitted a report regarding the general approach to conducting a review into Healthy Living with a view to establishing the terms of reference. The aim was to complete a final report during October.

Members were reminded of the extent of the consultation in formulating the Panel's Work Programme, which had subsequently been approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Board at its meeting held on 15 June 2004.

Specific reference was made to the Government's Consultation Document entitled 'Choosing Health', which highlighted the fundamental importance on taking action to safeguard health and prevent problems before they occurred. Reference was also made to Middlesbrough PCT who had reported on a range of issues on health inequalities and how they related to general deprivation as demonstrated by recent indicators. The improved access to leisure facilities providing free swimming during the summer period for children had been promoted as such a project funded by Middlesbrough PCT. Other initiatives such as introducing healthier options of food for children at an early stage were also considered a priority.

The Chair welcomed the Mayor to the meeting who gave an insight into some of the wider issues relating to healthy living as seen from his perspective the key points of which were as follows: -

- the importance of the subject matter was reflected in every day evidence which impinged on the Council's Strategy Themes;
- examples were given of statistical information from the services of the Police, Fire and paramedics, consultants, GP's, relating to incidents in respect of alcohol abuse, stress and smoke related illnesses, domestic fires relating to cigarettes and chip pans, many of which occurred in areas experiencing high levels of deprivation;
- an indication was also given as to how the above services such as the Police were achieving improvements by adopting a more proactive role;
- it was acknowledged that the issues surrounding obesity of all ages were complex and had numerous links into the 'healthy agenda';
- the need to direct resources towards preventative measures and education was acknowledged;

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- specific reference was made to a number of healthy eating initiatives especially targeted towards children as promoted by Sure Start and Middlesbrough PCT;
 - reference was also made to the scope for schools, major retail and restaurant outlets to promote more healthy eating initiatives;
 - it was suggested that the mechanisms for ensuring effective co-ordination between the Council, Local Strategic Partnership and between the various health organisations in terms of promoting healthy living and funding opportunities should be examined further.

The Scrutiny Panel acknowledged the wide-ranging issues and complexities surrounding the subject of healthy living and of the need for Members to focus on specific aspects in its review.

A number of areas were suggested such as the co-ordination and effectiveness of current activities, ability to pool resources for joint initiatives, information on strategies of Children's Trusts and scope for the development of further joint working.

The suggested terms of reference centred on the following: -

- (a) Are healthy living initiatives co-ordinated/
- (b) Can an overarching strategy be developed?
- (c) How are outcomes measured and evaluated?

AGREED as follows: -

1. That the Mayor be thanked for his attendance and contribution to the meeting.
2. That the terms of reference for the review of Healthy Living as outlined above be approved.
3. That the next meeting of the Health Scrutiny Panel be held on 11 August 2004 at 2.00 p.m.