
HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL

A meeting of the Health Scrutiny Panel was held on 11 August 2004.

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

OFFICIALS: J Bennington, P Clark, J Duffield, K Jackson and J Ord.

****APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were submitted on behalf of Councillors McIntyre and K Walker.

**** WELCOME- SCRUTINY SUPPORT OFFICER**

The Chair welcomed Jon Ord who was attending his first meeting of the Panel following his appointment as Scrutiny Support Officer specialising in health scrutiny.

**** 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 15 July 2004 were submitted and approved.

HEALTHY LIVING REVIEW

Further to the meeting of the Panel held on 15 July 2004 the Scrutiny Support Officer presented a report regarding the future approach to conducting the review into Healthy Living.

As part of the compilation of evidence it was suggested that a Seminar be arranged involving a range of organisations focusing on their specific roles and providing evidence of joint working and co-ordinated approach to healthy living.

AGREED as follows: -

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the future direction of the Health Living Review be discussed further following the presentation on Healthy Living in Middlesbrough initiative.

PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUES

The Public Protection Manager presented a report on the public health responsibilities of the Community Protection Service which operated in three divisions namely; Public Protection which included Healthy Living Centre functions; Sport and Leisure; and Community Safety.

The report detailed the work and outlined the initiatives undertaken by the Healthy Living Centre (HLC) the subject of a presentation later in the meeting.

Details were given of three public health projects funded by Health Action Zone (HAZ) and NRF which operated in conjunction with HLC in respect of the following: -

HAZ funded:

- Healthy Homes which assisted local residents improve the environment within their houses to improve local quality of life and tackle respiratory disorders;
- Healthy Eating which was Town wide and worked very closely with the HLC Healthy Eating project to increase the quantity of healthier foods in the local diet, particularly for those on a low income, and discourage the consumption of unhealthy foods.

NRF funded:

- Men's Health Project, a new NRF project focusing on community based schemes to improve diet, promote physical activity and encourage healthy lifestyles. The project also targeted male health in the black and minority ethnic communities, which required a more focused approach.

In terms of the wider health issues reference was made to other Council public health services and initiatives, which included: -

- provision of a subsidised Pest Control Service to local residents and the business community for which pensioners and low income 'means tested' households received a further subsidy;
- Local Agenda 21 which included specific themes relating to 'People's good health is protected' and 'Access to good food, water, shelter and fuel at reasonable cost';
- in terms of tobacco smoking further guidance and supporting Code of Practice was awaited in respect of The Public Place Charter, which was a voluntary agreement between the Government and the hospitality industry;
- Money Advice service provided to residents experiencing financial difficulties;
- Enforcement action to discourage the illegal sale of age restricted products with particular regard to alcohol enforcement owing to its impact on the Town and in the national agenda;
- Middlesbrough's Voluntary Air Quality Management Plan to ensure local air continued to be within the prescribed standards.

An indication was given of several effective health related co-ordination mechanisms currently operating with the Council.

In order to achieve a more strategic approach to health protection/public health co-ordination it was suggested that consideration should be given to the establishment of a 'Corporate Public Health Group' within the Council. The report outlined suggested terms of reference which aimed to improve co-ordination, share learning and effectively support the existing partnership groups to ensure Middlesbrough's public health priorities were better addressed within the Council.

The Panel sought clarification on a number of points and discussed the extent to which the Council's public health services and in particular the HLC was aimed to alleviate social deprivation and poor health. It was noted that as a basic principle, the HLC projects were either provided on a free basis or at a subsidised cost.

Members focused on the Council's Money Advice Service for residents, particular amongst the low income groups who were experiencing financial problems and discussed the current level of co-ordination with the Welfare Rights Service, the Citizens Advice Bureau and the referral system from GP's.

AGREED as follows: -

1. That the information provided be noted.
2. That further information be provided on the Council's Money Advice Service and the level of joint working with other agencies at the next meeting of the Panel to be held in 2-3 weeks time.

HEALTHY LIVING INITIATIVE PRESENTATION

The Healthy Living Co-ordinator gave a presentation on the Healthy Living in Middlesbrough initiative which had been established in October 2002 and had received nearly £1m funding over three years from the Government's New Opportunities Fund.

The main aims of the HLC were described as follows:

- To improve the mental and physical health of young people in Middlesbrough's most disadvantaged wards (aged 0-35).
- To stop the cycle of poor health.
- To provide the next generation with opportunities they need to help them live healthy and happy lives.
- To narrow the health gap between our communities.
- To contribute to the Government's health agenda (CHD/Stroke, cancer, mental health).

HLC projects were delivered from a range of venues in the centre of communities in six of Middlesbrough's most disadvantaged wards, namely, Thorntree, Pallister, Park End, Hemlington, Beckfield and Ayresome with the first and second wards listed in the top 10 most deprived wards in England and Wales.

Statistical information was provided in relation to high levels in the death rate, CHD rate, lung cancer, infant mortality rate, and low physical activity which demonstrated Middlesbrough's poor health records as evidenced in Tees Lifestyle Survey 2000.

Information was provided of the 10 Healthy Living in Middlesbrough projects which aimed to target 'tomorrow's adults to break the cycle of poor health' and helped to meet targets in respect of the Community Strategy 2002, PCT's Health Improvement Programme 2002/05, PCT's Obesity Strategy, The Council's Physical Activity Strategy and the Local Agenda 21 Action Plan: -

- Healthy Eating offered advice and workshops to families in East Middlesbrough to encourage more fruit and vegetable consumption and also provided school breakfast clubs and cookery classes;
- Healthy Eating Cafeteria provided at the refurbished former Coffee Bar in Joe Walton's CYC, Berwick Hills which provided healthy food at a low price and employed 2 mentors to give healthy eating messages to their peers;
- Youth Outreach Work provided through three dedicated youth workers focusing on health issues for teenagers through Linx, Hemlington;
- Translink, a mini bus to allow easy access to activities for groups from the target areas plus free driver accredited training for community members'
- Kidz Power involving special non-competitive fitness sessions for 6-12 year olds, increasing fitness, confidence and self-esteem;
- Physical Activity provided in East Middlesbrough community centres offering new physical and mental health activities within local community centres and elsewhere and activity weekends away;
- Healthy Homes providing advice on indoor air pollution and passive smoking;
- Allotments involving the development of Berwick Hills allotment site through mapped Health walks and cycling routes, plus a community and a school plot to grow fruit and vegetables;
- Childminding and Toy Library based in Ayresome offering families childminding training and increased number of childminders in deprived areas, plus a toy library service.

All HLC projects worked in partnership with each other and had developed strong links with Middlesbrough PCT (representative from which chaired the HLC Board Management), Sure Starts, Council Service Units, key local agencies such as Connexions and Middlesbrough Football Club.

Specific reference was made to the assistance provided at schools and activities organised at Council Youth Centres.

Details were provided of several publicity events organised by HLC and statistical information on overall attendance, which included: -

Year 1

- 7,000 attending workshops/events/training
- 7,000 using the new Healthy Options cafeteria
- 9,000 aged 0-15
- 4,500 aged 16 to 64
- 980 aged 65+

Year 2

- 13,000 so far (up to July 2004).

An indication was given of the monitoring arrangements and evaluation process. It was noted that projects had exceeded their targets so far and were independently evaluated by the University of Teesside the final report from which was programmed for 2005.

Since the funding for HLC was time limited to October 2005 a Commissioning Event had been organised for 14 September to discuss future funding and possibility of diversifying some of the projects.

The Panel sought clarification on a number of points and focused on the following areas in their subsequent deliberations: -

Links to Schools:

- all schools including City Academies had been found to be responsive to the health/community initiatives;
- organised health events encouraged involvement of parents and family;
- it was recognised that although the initiatives were aimed towards the 0-35 age group younger persons in schools had been the most receptive to the schemes;
- HLC had consulted with the Council's catering service and provided updated information on healthier eating options to schools including primary schools;
- The HAZ funded Healthy Eating initiative was promoted Town wide.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

- In terms of accessing health statistics reference was made to the requirements of the 10 Service Level Agreements between the Community Protection Service and the Project Officers in terms of providing health records which varied between the different projects and were used to demonstrate that targets were being met in order to satisfy the criteria to receive New Opportunities funding;
- It was acknowledged that whilst take-up of the initiatives could be generally ascertained it was more difficult to measure health benefits and improvement which may not be evident for a number of years.

Links with Middlesbrough PCT:

- Close links had been developed between the Council and the PCT and on a formal basis by means of the Local Strategic Partnership;
- PCT had indicated their keenness to support the HAZ and NRF funded initiatives;

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- Reference was made to a joint bid between the Council and the PCT for Beacon status in terms of healthy communities in recognition of the improvements made and positive measures being pursued.

Publicity:

- Information on health and safety issues in particular food hygiene was provided as part of the educational promotional material made available at the projects and organised events;
- In addition to the statutory inspections reference was made to the preventative work undertaken by the Council's Environmental Health Officers.

Council Co-ordination - Possible Future Action

- in recognition of the need to take into account the wider health issues and achieve a more strategic framework for joint working Officers supported the suggestion for the establishment of a Corporate Public Health Group as outlined.

AGREED as follows: -

1. That the Officers be thanked for the information provided and contribution to the subsequent deliberations.
2. That arrangements be made for a Seminar to be held on a mutually acceptable date in September commencing at 10.00 a.m. for representatives from a range of organisations such as the Local Authority, Local Strategic Partnership, PCT and Public Health Observatory to explain their specific roles and provide evidence of joint working.
3. That the invitation to attend the above Seminar be extended to Members of other Health Scrutiny Panels in the Tees Valley.