

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 29th April, 2014

Report of the Lead Officer for Health Scrutiny

Health Scrutiny Committee Review of Tobacco Control

Purpose of Report

1. To consider recommendations arising the Health Scrutiny Committee's review of tobacco control and other updates.

Background

2. Smoking is a major problem for public services both nationally and locally. Within Dudley it is estimated to be the cause of over 480 deaths per year; and is the single biggest determinant of inequality in life expectancy across communities.
3. Members wanted to investigate how the prevalence of smoking in the borough might be tackled and shape practical recommendations for developing and strengthening the work of the Council and health improvement partners in the area of tobacco control.
4. The review panel was established in October 2013 comprising Councillors: Ridney; Harris; and Rogers specifically to:
 - evaluate effectiveness of partnership working in reducing overall prevalence and assess outcomes of local strategy
 - spotlight challenging areas and discuss possible solutions involving partner organisations
 - assess measures geared to minimise uptake of smoking amongst young people and tackle consumption of illicit products across areas of high smoking prevalence
 - evaluate the current level of involvement and contribution of key public employers to the promotion of in smoking cessation and prevention services for staff.
5. Two evidence sessions were subsequently held with field specialists and other contributors enabling members to gain a richer insight into tobacco control practice and priorities; with the aim of securing more incisive recommendations.

6. Contributors included representatives from; Trading Standards; Housing Management; Public Health and the Family Nursing Partnership. Members were particularly grateful to the young people from 'Kick-Ash' whose views on services needed were very useful.
7. On 27th March 2014 the Heath Scrutiny Committee considered a summary of the review panel's main findings and approved proposals to consolidate recommendations into a review action plan. The review report and corresponding action plan are attached at appendix 1 for Board approval.
8. It is proposed that the Board endorse the action plan for referral to Cabinet and partner bodies with the particular aim of hardwiring improvements in corporate strategy; to maximise long term success. The Tobacco Strategy Reference Group will have a role in overseeing this.

Other Work

9. Separately, the Committee's second review for 2013/14 on the theme patient experience is gathering pace. Members have agreed to hold an initial evidence meeting with expert contributors April/May; with the aim of advancing preferred lines of enquiry in a harmonized way across agencies.
10. Stakeholder consultation on the development of the Committee's work plan will launch in May encompassing key commissioners and providers and local consumer champion for health care: HealthWatch. A number of important issues have already been identified during the Committee's heavy work schedule amid the on-set of NHS reforms. Work pressures will continue to trend as intentions of new system leaders consulted on in 2013/14 come to bear. This implies a challenge to increasingly prioritise issues moving into 2014/15 so as to maintain timely and incisive scrutiny.
11. The Board will be consulted as the work develops with the aim of maximising added value across Council policy and health improvement partners.

Finance

12. This report outlines findings to date on tobacco reduction in accord with the review panel's terms of reference and outlines further options for accelerating this reduction.
13. Implementation of at least some of the recommendations may have financial implications (e.g. training costs) for the Council and health improvement partners however it is not possible to quantify costs at this stage.
14. Changes to services provided by the authority arising from the review would require further explanation and financial implications scrutinised further; in the light of the Council's on-going budget programme.

Law

15. Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 authorises the Council to do anything which is calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the exercise of any of its functions.
16. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 places the scrutiny of health, care and well-being services by local authority members onto a statutory footing.

Equality Impact

17. The work of the Committee can be seen as contributing to the equality agenda in the pursuit of improving health and wellbeing for all. This implies a challenge to ensure that services meet the needs of all sectors of the community to make this an even greater reality in Dudley.

Recommendation

18. It is recommended that the Board:
 - note this report;
 - endorse the Committee's recommendations and corresponding action plan at appendix 1 for referral to Cabinet and external agents.



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Documents used in the preparation of this report:-

1. Terms of Reference and Annual Scrutiny Programme 2013-14. Health Scrutiny Committee July 16th 2013.