

**PUBLIC HEALTH, WELLNESS & CULTURE SCRUTINY PANEL  
POLICY REVIEW – ROLES, RELATIONSHIPS AND ADDING VALUE**

**Report of the Lead Scrutiny Member for Public Health Wellness and Culture**

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This report describes the outcome of a review which considered the roles and relationships of health bodies within the new structures and the development of a partnership protocol.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 During 2012 the Scrutiny Committee commissioned the Public Health, Wellness and Culture Scrutiny Panel to carry out a review of the role of the local authority in health issues, primarily the transfer of public health into the local authority.
- 2.2 One of the conclusions of that review was that a partnership protocol would help to provide clarity of roles and relationships and would assist new working arrangements.
- 2.3 The evidence gathering for that review highlighted that the Department of Health's public health strategy emphasises that the shift to local authorities should increase accountability. This should incorporate existing governance structures, including the work of overview and scrutiny and also embrace new roles and relationships, particularly through the coordinating role of the health and wellbeing board.
- 2.4 The Scrutiny Committee subsequently endorsed a recommendation to Cabinet that a health protocol should be developed.

**3. Development of a Protocol**

- 3.1 The objectives were:
- To understand the independent, but complementary, roles and responsibilities of local authority health scrutiny, local Healthwatch, health and wellbeing board, clinical commissioning group and NHS Commissioning Board.

- To produce a partnership protocol in support of the new structure being effective, accountable, transparent and inclusive.
- 3.2 Scrutiny members considered national policy context - structures, roles and responsibilities, Health Scrutiny Regulations and Guidance and governance arrangements and terms of reference for the various bodies.
- 3.3 The protocol (attached as **Appendix 1**) includes sections on information sharing, communication, engagement reporting mechanisms and organisational liaison.

#### **4. Consultation**

- 4.1 Consultation was carried out with all signatories to a draft protocol during April 2013.
- 4.2 All signatories commented that the document would be very useful and all were keen to ensure the document was robust. There was particular support for the inclusion of an information sharing agreement and this was enhanced with the commitment to share forward plans.
- 4.3 The largest number of comments were around public / patient engagement and how the protocol could be used to support and facilitate public access to information and the way that patients' views were received and used, including the voice of children and young people.

#### **5. Conclusion and Recommendations**

- 5.1 The Centre for Public Scrutiny is encouraging local authorities to establish similar partnership agreements and a number of regional events are being held for scrutiny members to use their experience of policy development to carry out the relevant evidence gathering to contribute to the production of a protocol.
- 5.2 The Committee is asked to endorse the partnership protocol prior to referral to the Health & Wellbeing Board.

#### **6. Background Papers**

Agenda Papers Public Health, Wellness & Culture Panel January - April 2013

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**Contact Officer:** Karen Brown, Scrutiny  
Officer [karen.brown@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:karen.brown@sunderland.gov.uk)  
0191 561 1004