

SUNDERLAND HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

26 July 2013

RESPONSE TO ECONOMY, CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT REGIONAL ADVISORY GROUP**Report of the Head of Strategy, Policy and Performance****1.0 Purpose of the Report**

1.1 The report details a proposed response to the recommendations made by the Economy, Culture and Environment Regional Advisory Group. This Group (chaired by Lord Shipley) was established in 2008 as part of the implementation of the *Better Health, Fairer Health* strategy and has produced a report that is intended to support Health and Wellbeing Boards in carrying out their new responsibilities.

2.0 Background

2.1 In February 2008 the former Labour Government announced ambitious plans to transform the health of the North East. The area's first ever health and well-being strategy, *Better Health, Fairer Health* was launched by the then minister for the region Nick Brown.

2.2 The strategy was intended to be implemented over 25 years and have ten key themes that would be developed by regional advisory groups – one of the themes was economy, culture and environment. As a consequence of the change in Government this strategy has been curtailed, however during the last four years the Economy, Culture and Environment Group has continued to research its theme and prepared a number of recommendations that are intended to support the work of Health and Wellbeing Boards.

2.3 The Regional Advisory Group has recognised that local health priorities are likely to include the wider determinants of health because of their impact on health and health inequalities.

Consequently the recommendations in their document specifically focus on:

- Active Travel
- Environment – Green space and Air quality
- Housing and Homelessness
- Fuel Poverty and Excess Winter Deaths
- Healthier workforce
- Culture, arts and health.

and include strategic leadership; communications and engagement and some examples of good practice and innovation.

2.4 Sunderland's new Health and Wellbeing Strategy (HWBS) takes an assets based approach to health improvement in the city. To help inform and direct this approach the strategy includes several design principles and highlights

several of the city's assets that will be important in helping to enable the approach. These include pursuing the wider determinants of health but also many other factors that will help to ensure that health improvement in the city is tackled effectively. For instance, the use of customer insight and local intelligence to facilitate effective prevention and early intervention measures, as well as joint working across partners that will enable us to provide outcome focussed integrated services.

3.0 Proposed Response

3.1 The Health and Wellbeing Board's proposed response is intended to demonstrate to the Regional Advisory Group the manner in which the Board is tackling the wider determinants of health and uses the six categories pursued by the Group as outlined above. The content of the response is provided in Appendix 1.

3.2 The response includes examples of how partners have and continue to provide health improvement services as well as support to the people of Sunderland. This information will be forwarded to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy Working Group to help inform HWBS action planning.

4.0 Recommendations

- 4.1** The Board is recommended to
- Review the proposed response to the Economy, Culture and Environment Regional Advisory Group
 - Make any suggestions to amendments and/or additions.

Appendix 1

Dear Lord Shipley

The Sunderland Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) were pleased to receive your letter and the document prepared by the Economy, Culture and Environment Regional Advisory Group about the wider determinants of health.

The Board is happy to advise that many of the suggestions the Group has put forward are being pursued by the Board through its new Health and Wellbeing Strategy (HWBS).

Sunderland's new HWBS takes an assets based approach to health improvement in the city. To help inform and direct this approach the strategy includes several design principles and highlights several of the city's assets that will be important in helping to enable the approach. These include pursuing the wider determinants of health but also many other factors that will help to ensure that health improvement in the city is tackled effectively. For instance, the use of customer insight and local intelligence to facilitate effective prevention and early intervention measures, as well as joint working across partners that will enable us to provide outcome focussed integrated services. A copy of our HWBS is enclosed.

The HWBB has ensured that its HWBS has been informed by the public and partners throughout its development. There have been five well attended public engagement events that have shaped the strategy during the course of its development over the last year. This gives the HWBB confidence that not only is the direction and ethos of the strategy reflective of local circumstances, but also that the support of both the public and voluntary sectors will be available when needed.

We have outlined in the following paragraphs just some of the current activity that is taking place in Sunderland to improve the health of residents. We hope this provides some reassurance that, although we are at the very early stages of our policy development and drive to improve health across Sunderland, we are focussed and determined to ensure success by employing a range of measures that include the wider determinants of health.

Active Travel

A number of activities and programmes are listed below that give an indication of the variety of routes being used to promote active travel in Sunderland. These include encouraging people to be more active in their leisure time and when travelling to work as well as through utilising the city's green space, achieving this through joint working with local organisations and large local employers.

Current activities that are being successfully delivered in Sunderland include:

- Organised, mass participation cycling events to raise the profile of cycling and the city's cycle network offer. More than 600 people took part in the Sunderland BIG Bike Ride
- Weekly health walks and Nordic walking programmes as well as an annual mass participation walking event. The annual walking figures for 2012-2013 are: 518 walks delivered, 144 new people attending a walk, 3450 attendances across walks

- The 'Feet First' and 'Bike It' schemes organised by Sustrans that aim to encourage both pupils and their families to use alternative forms of transport to get to and from school. Feet First is taking place in 11 secondary schools and encourages the use of skateboards and scooters. Bike It is taking place in two secondary schools and eight primary schools and encourages cycling by organising bike rides, training pupils about basic bike repairs as well as providing free breakfasts to those that ride their bike to school. Both schemes help to reduce congestion around schools
- A virtual cycle and walking network to facilitate growth in cycling and joint promotion of opportunities and information
- The development of a cycling HUB at Herrington Country Park which, in time, will see Sustrans and their network of volunteers leading led-cycle rides to school children and the general public within Herrington Country Park.
- Sunderland Councils Employee Wellness Programme which has been developed to support employees in making healthier lifestyle choices that will improve their health and well-being. Assisting employees in making healthier lifestyle choices is a primary aim of the organisation and the programme has recently received the North East Better Health at Work Award silver status.

Sunderland Council also recently launched the 'Go Smarter to Work' programme that aims to:

- Help local businesses promote a healthier, cheaper and more environmentally friendly way for employees to travel to and from their place of work
- Reduce congestion and improve access to employment.

Active Travel and a healthy workforce are the two main objectives for the 'Go Smarter to Work' programme. The launch was attended by senior HR and other managers from, for example, Rolls Royce, BAE, Nissan, Vantec, HMRC, DWP and Unipres.

Environment – Green space and Air quality

Making best use of Sunderland's assets is a feature of our HWBS and this includes its attractive coast and easy-to-reach countryside. The following bullet points highlight the volume and accessibility of these assets as well as the improvements that are planned and the incorporation of these assets into the city's future infrastructure developments.

Based on the following statistics it is fair to describe Sunderland as a green city:

- There are a total of 1764 greenspace sites covering 27.6% of the city, and when combined with the open countryside there are over 8,000 hectares (57%) of 'undeveloped' green land in the city
- 1,505 hectares of land have an amenity greenspace function, that's 5.34 hectares per 1000 population
- The city has 100 outdoor fixed play sites and 89% of children and young people (aged 5-16 years) have good access to high quality play
- There are 42 formal parks and country parks in the city and 74% of the population have good walking access to one of these
- There are five greenspaces in the city awarded Green Flag status
- There are 100 hectares of allotments in the city and provision is estimated to be 50% higher than the national average

- 48% of the city population have access to a quality natural greenspace over 2 hectares in size, following Natural England ANGST criteria. 66% of the city population have access to a quality woodland site over 2 hectares in size, following Woodland Trust criteria
- There are more than 100 separate outdoor sports locations across the city (not including school provision that is restricted to school use only). These sites account for 23% of the city's greenspace.
- There are 80 kilometres of off-road cycleway in the city.

Sunderland is committed to maintaining and improving its environment with environmental and greenspace improvements. Activity includes reducing the amount of neglected land, improving the C2C through Sunderland as well as other cycle routes and rights of way, improving access to outdoor play equipment and the possible upgrade of two major greenspaces to Local Nature Reserve status.

Groundwork in Sunderland has run a number of projects that have combined to use and improve the environment as well as improve people's health and wellbeing.

These projects include:

- The Green Activity Scheme which is providing GP referred or self-referred clients with gentle exercising through gardening, walks and conservation activities. People taking part in Green Activity learn how to plant, water and harvest crops in allotment gardens, as well as how to grow their own food at home. Spending time in a 'green space' like a park or allotment can help to improve mental health and reduce stress
- GreenStart is a health and environment programme for 0-5s and their families who get involved in food growing, nature walks, environmental crafts and games as well as environmental visits and trips. The outcome is that parents feel fitter and healthier, they consider their children to be fitter and healthier, they socialise more with other parents and learn how to use the environment around them as a tool for learning and supporting healthier lifestyles
- Local volunteers and young people came together to bring derelict and fly tipped allotment plots back into use through the Allotments North project; it also created community allotment plots that are now ran by volunteers.

The council and City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Trust work in partnership to provide an exercise referral programme. A GP or healthcare professional can refer anyone to the programme whose health they feel can be improved by physical activity. As well as being able to use Wellness Centres participants can access cycling and the Wellness walking programme. Each of the weekly 'health' walks is led by a volunteer walk leader, and lasts between 30 to 60 minutes. Walk routes are planned by the walk leader to be suitable for all ages, fitness levels and abilities. All walks are free and are accredited through the National Ramblers Walking for Health scheme.

Also, the city's Local Development Framework is being reviewed with a view to improving green infrastructure, healthy urban planning, wellness and physical activity as well as environmental health (including air quality). Policies will also guide proposed development to support infrastructure improvements such as providing for new and improved greenspace, play provision, biodiversity, landscape improvements, highway improvements etc.

Housing and Homelessness

Sunderland Council has a Residential Design Guide aimed at everyone involved in the housing development process. Its aim is to assist in achieving high quality and sustainable 'places for living' in Sunderland. The guide was published in 2008 and has broadly influenced housing developments across the city since then.

All too often new residential developments are not well connected to local services and promote dependency on the car. This guide encourages walking, cycling and the use of public transport to allow easy access for everyone - including people without a car. It includes a focus on safety, designing an attractive environment, access to services, preventing crime, provisions for disabled people, and much more besides.

In terms of homelessness a more preventative agenda has been adopted and the number of cases of individuals/families accepted as unintentionally homeless and in priority need has been reducing:

- In 2003/2004 the number of homelessness acceptances in Sunderland was 894 and this had subsequently fallen to 82 in April 2012, the lowest number in over 12 years
- The number of prevention cases in 2005/2006 was 431 and this has improved significantly to 765 cases in April 2012 highlighting the success of our prevention agenda locally.

Sunderland Council has also taken steps to ensure that older and vulnerable residents in Sunderland are housed in accommodation that will have a positive impact on their physical health as well as their mental health and wellbeing. This means encouraging active ageing, responding to less active ageing, and providing suitable accommodation for adults with disabilities –all helping to prevent the need for more intensive forms of accommodation support. To this end the council has:

- Developed four extra care housing schemes which provide 174 mixed tenure extra care properties including seven reablement apartments. These schemes include seven high energy efficient homes
- A fifth extra care scheme is underway and will provide a further 175 apartments of which 17 will be purpose designed for people with dementia
- Another scheme is underway that will provide a further 38 apartments for people with dementia
- Planning approval has been granted for another two extra care schemes for 142 apartments, 20 of which are designed for people with dementia and 30 bungalows.

Residents in extra care housing have been consulted in order to get feedback about their new living arrangements. This information is being used to inform the design of new extra care schemes - bids have been put forward to the Homes and Community Agency for more schemes.

Beyond this a successful bid has been made to the Department of Health for £1 million to help improve the living environments for people with dementia and regeneration proposals for two significant areas of the city include the provision of extra care housing.

There has also been a growth of hostel type accommodation across the city with a clear distinction between private sector establishments and those services that are contracted with the Council to provide accommodation and housing related support.

A number of privately run hostels do not meet with the Government's 'Homelessness Change Programme' criteria for hostel accommodation. To help tackle this problem the Council in partnership with the Homes and Communities Agency have purchased the largest hostel with the intention that all residents will be moved on in a planned way and the hostel closed by March 2014.

Fuel Poverty and Excess Winter Deaths

The latest data sets indicate that excess winter deaths in Sunderland are not significantly different from the national average, standing at 120 for 2009/2010 – this equates to 11% of all North East winter deaths (ONS, 2010)

Partners have worked together using their combined insight and local intelligence to identify those individuals and households that are most vulnerable. Tackling fuel poverty and excess winter deaths in this way helps to ensure a fair distribution of resources and helps more people to achieve better health, thereby progressing the HWBS's health equity principle.

Since January 2013 both private and social housing stock in Sunderland have begun to benefit from a three year retrofitting programme that will see improvements such as loft insulation, cavity wall insulation and solid wall insulation – over 57,000 homes will be improved. As well as this a further 6,500 homes will have renewable energy sources such as solar panels installed and progress will be made to replacing an estimated 83,000 existing central heating boilers with condensing boilers.

Age UK and Sunderland Council have worked together to help relieve further the burden of fuel poverty. Together they have provided information, advice and guidance to over 3000 people and trained over 600 staff in energy efficiency. Furthermore Age UK provide hardship grants to vulnerable homeowners who are in receipt of qualifying benefits (who are not eligible for the Affordable Warmth scheme) or who have (or someone living in their home has) a cold exacerbated illness e.g. COPD or asthma. The grant will enable more people to receive support such as heating repairs and boiler replacement following a recommendation from a Domestic Energy Assessor. Age UK Sunderland can also help vulnerable people who are in crisis without heating or hot water by providing temporary heaters, blankets and flasks.

The council was also the beneficiary of £500,000 of funding from DECC to carry out loft and cavity wall insulation as well as external wall insulation – this was a short term scheme awarded for the period February to March 2013. As well as this a 'Boilers on Prescription' scheme has been introduced and in June the Council will join the next round of Energy Auctions with a view to introducing a Collective Switching Project for residents. Introducing communities to schemes such as Collective Switching reinforces the assets approach to health by empowering them and increasing their independence while also reducing their reliance on public services.

Sunderland is also one of the six Warm Up North partners along with Durham, Darlington, Newcastle, South Tyneside and Northumberland. The project is in the process of procuring a Delivery Partner / Green Deal Provider to improve the energy efficiency of domestic properties and publicly owned non domestic properties across the North East using the Government's new Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation ('ECO') initiative.

Healthier workforce

Sunderland's HWBS links directly to this particular recommendation. The strategy's fourth objective – supporting everyone to contribute – highlights the fact that unemployment can have a detrimental affect on a person's health. Indeed it is known that poorer health can be found amongst those who are unemployed for longest. So the strategy includes a focus on bringing agencies together to ensure that they work together to build confidence and motivation and provide pathways into training and employment. There is also a focus on working with employers so that they understand how the policies they implement can have a significant effect on both the health of their employees and their employee's families.

The Regional Advisory Group makes the suggestion that employers support the North East Better Health at Work Awards. In 2012 there were 20 companies in Sunderland engaged in North East Better Health at Work from a range of backgrounds across the private, public and voluntary sector. Of these, 16 took part in the Better Health at Work Award reaching over 26,000 employees. These companies are achieving different levels of the award with eight at Bronze level, four Silver, three Gold and one is continuing excellence. As part of its work in achieving its HWBS objectives, the Health and Wellbeing Board will promote the benefits of engaging in this program to other employers in the city.

As a leading member of the Board, Sunderland Council can lead by example through its participation in the Awards. The Council has an Employee Wellness Programme (EWP) that focuses on improving the health and wellbeing of all Council employees by encouraging positive lifestyle changes, be it improved nutrition, physical activity, smoking cessation, safe alcohol levels etc. The ultimate aims of the EWP are to contribute to reduced sickness absence rates (and associated costs), improve productivity, improve morale and to pass on positive healthy lifestyle messages to the wider community via our workforce.

The types of initiatives the council has launched thus far include drop in sessions for employees to get advice and support about any aspect of their health and wellbeing, working with the council's Occupational Health Unit for those employees with a recognised health/future health problem, delivering health walks, jogging groups and exercise classes etc. Employees are also signposted to a range of activities already available across the City that promote different health related topics each month.

Culture, Arts and Health

Sunderland has many cultural and arts facilities such as the Museum & Winter Gardens, Glass Centre, Monkwearmouth Station, leisure facilities as well as beaches along its seafront. The North East Residents Survey shows that satisfaction with museums/galleries and theatres/concerts is much better than the average at 52% vs 41% and 49% vs 42% respectively.

To carry on the legacy of the London 2012 Olympics, Sunderland has a number of events taking place during 2013, these include the BIG Areobathon, BIG Mini Fun Run, BIG Swimathon, BIG Bike Ride, BIG Walk and an Adventure Week. This programme builds on the success of the 'Sunderland 2012' events programme which had over 144,000 attendances.

Not only are these events continuing the positive spirit and interest in sport and healthy leisure pursuits, but also use volunteers to staff the events. Volunteers are actively involved through marshalling and other hands on tasks. We are able to help them feel part of the community and pass on positive messages to them about health and lifestyle. Some volunteers have progressed to gain skills and qualifications as a result of volunteering in our programmes and events.

The national Summer Reading Scheme was introduced to schools in June 2013 and uses volunteers to support young people with reading in libraries. Partners are also promoting the new 'Books on Prescription' (Reading Well) scheme as well as national reading initiatives such as Bookstart, World Book Day and Summer Reading Challenge. Books on Prescription is a joint initiative from independent charity The Reading Agency and the Society of Chief Librarians, working with local library services. It offers people self-help books as part of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) prescribed by a health professional. The scheme works within National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines which recommend the approach for a range of common mental health disorders. Sunderland libraries will have a core list of 30 titles covering issues such as anxiety, depression, phobias, panic attacks, bulimia and sleep problems. These will be available to borrow from local library branches.

In 2010 the Council undertook a major consultation with residents about the redevelopment of its seafront facilities. Since then work has been undertaken to improve the environment and help people to enjoy the city's coastline. This work will continue and £1.5 million has been allocated to pay for future improvements.

Support has also been given to Washington Wildfowl and Wetland Trust, Washington Old Hall, Beamish Museum, and collaboration with the local community has resulted in a successful bid for Heritage Lottery Funding to redevelop Hylton Castle. Partners have also worked together to develop and deliver a range of cultural and heritage activities across the city including museum exhibitions, learning and events, Heritage Open Days in communities, Oral Histories reminiscence sessions and the Sunderland History Fair 2012. Planning is now underway for the Washington Heritage and Community Festival.

The city's Cultural Strategy is currently at the early stages of a review and the time is now right to explore how this important strategy can link into the newly established health responsibilities of the HWBB. For example, linking Sunderland's cultural 'offer' with Active Travel and exploring ways to create 'cultural routes/pathways' in and around the city.

Conclusion

Although the preceding paragraphs paint a positive picture of how health and health inequalities are being tackled across Sunderland through the social determinants of

health, the Health and Wellbeing Board are in no doubt of the size of the task ahead. The people of Sunderland have significant health problems and a great deal of work will need to be undertaken to improve this situation. However the new HWBS provides the strategic direction, and importantly the approval of key partners across the public and voluntary sectors, that will allow these problems to be tackled effectively and so help improve the life chances of the people of Sunderland.

The HWBB appreciates the work undertaken by the Economy, Culture and Environment Regional Advisory Group. We hope the action taken by the Board to date provides some encouragement that Sunderland is and will continue to implement the Groups recommendations as we implement our HWBS.

Yours sincerely,