

BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL (BMBC)

This matter is not a Key Decision within the council's definition and has not been included in the relevant Forward Plan.

Report of the Executive Director
Core Services

SCRUTINY TASK AND FINISH GROUP (TFG) REPORT ON THE PUBLIC HEALTH STRATEGY 2016-18

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To report to Cabinet the findings of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee (OSC) from the investigation undertaken on its behalf by the Public Health Task & Finish Group (TFG). This included reviewing the work undertaken as part of the Public Health Strategy 2016-18, considering the plans for the future priorities, as well as making recommendations for improvements.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **That Cabinet considers the conclusions and recommendations set out in section 6 as a result of the TFG's review of BMBC's Public Health Strategy 2016-18.**

3. Introduction/Background

- 3.1 As part of its work programme the OSC agreed to undertake a TFG investigation of the Council's Public Health Strategy 2016-18. Further to previous investigations undertaken by the OSC and its TFGs, the OSC felt it was an opportune time to follow up on this work. Also, to consider the work being undertaken as part of the current Public Health strategy along with utilising Member knowledge of their communities to feed into the development of future priorities.
- 3.2 The members of the TFG who undertook this investigation included the following: Councillor Gill Carr (TFG Lead Member), Councillor Jeff Ennis, Councillor Annette Gollick, Councillor Wayne Johnson, Councillor Pauline Phillips, Councillor Margaret Sheard, Councillor Sarah Tattersall and Co-opted members Pauline Gould and John Winter.

4. What the Task & Finish Group (TFG) looked at

- 4.1 Initially, the TFG met to consider the scope of the investigation. This included discussing their key concerns and public health issues in their local communities. Given the points raised, the group agreed to hold sessions on each of the three priorities in the strategy of: 'increasing levels of physical activity'; 'creating a smokefree generation'; and 'improving oral health of children'; followed by considering and finding out more about the potential future priorities.
- 4.2 The TFG undertook a number of 'check and challenge' sessions with officers regarding the work being carried out and future plans. This involved asking

questions of them regarding their work, their involvement and partnership working with other agencies including the impact of this on Barnsley residents. This included meeting with Council representatives working in both the Public Health Core Team as well as those placed in Directorates.

5. What the Task & Finish Group found

- 5.1 The TFG received a presentation on the work being done with regards to increasing physical activity levels in the borough. The group welcomed the variety of initiatives in place, including those to target people who don't normally participate in physical activity. Work was being done to seek funding to improve local sports facilities and the group congratulated the officers on winning the 'Ping' funding to place table tennis tables around the borough, which had proved successful in increasing physical activity levels. The TFG raised concerns regarding low physical activity levels in schools and the challenges faced in engaging with them due to the number of 'cold calls' they already receive from a variety of agencies. The group also highlighted the importance of activities/initiatives being available in all local communities and not focused in the town centre, given the cost of travel being a barrier for many residents.
- 5.2 With regards to 'creating a smokefree generation,' the TFG were given a presentation on the range of work both locally and nationally to reduce smoking prevalence. The group were reminded of the data which still indicates that smoking is the biggest cause of avoidable death in Barnsley, but also how extremely addictive it is. The TFG were made aware of the effectiveness of the Barnsley Tobacco Alliance and the work being done to recover illicit tobacco as well as utilise new legislation to prosecute those smoking in cars when a child was present. Similarly, the use of evidence-based approaches to reduce smoking by targeting information at specific groups as well as working to 'de-normalise' smoking and make it invisible, to prevent young people from starting.
- 5.3 The TFG queried the extent to which carbon monoxide measuring devices had been used in Barnsley to encourage people not to smoke, for example making parents aware of how their smoking is harming their children. The group were given examples of this elsewhere such as the 'Babyclear' initiative however this was not something which had been pursued in Barnsley. In response to the TFG asking what they could do to help support a reduction in smoking prevalence, the service were keen to emphasise the importance of making 'every contact count'. This included being mindful of how addictive smoking is, but spreading the word regarding the services and support available, and that it's free.
- 5.4 In relation to improving the oral health of children, the TFG were advised of the different initiatives in place both to encourage good care of teeth, for example by providing tooth brushing packs, as well as prevent decay, such as initiatives to reduce sugar intake. The TFG were made aware of the improving picture regarding children's oral health in Barnsley, however there is still a gap between Barnsley's performance against regional and national figures. The group queried the availability of dentists in Barnsley and highlighted the lack of knowledge amongst Barnsley communities regarding access to dental services, including awareness of free dental treatment being available for those on job seekers allowance. The group discussed the work done by Area Councils to promote oral health in local

communities; the officers advised they could provide effective support to this as they had access to ready-done tooth-brushing packs which also included guidance information. The TFG were also made aware of the Council's Oral Health Improvement Action Group which the service were keen to have an Elected Member representative on.

- 5.5 The TFG were introduced to the potential future priorities for the Public Health Service which are 'Alcohol', 'Food' and 'Emotional Resilience'. The group were in support of these priorities and proposals put forward regarding each work stream and were keen to highlight the importance of individuals taking responsibility for their own health. It was also noted that it is the local authority's responsibility to make Barnsley a place where healthy choices are easy to make.
- 5.6 In relation to alcohol, the TFG queried the contribution of town centre bars/off-licences in particular, regarding provision of for example the night marshalling service and NHS services required. Also, whether the 'Best Bar None' scheme in the town centre would be rolled out to other areas. The TFG were also keen to ensure that where evidence suggests their effectiveness, that existing support services in the community were utilised, such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) groups and Alanon Groups which support people who have been affected by other people's drinking.
- 5.7 With regards to the planned work around changing the food environment and culture within Barnsley, the TFG were keen to raise concerns regarding the number of fast food outlets in the borough, particularly near to schools, as well as the availability of drinks with high sugar content. They also highlighted the lack of availability of healthy choices within food outlets, as well as concern regarding limited teaching in schools on the preparation of foods from scratch, in particular, healthy meal options. The group also felt that it was important to ensure that clear age-appropriate messages were provided to communities on their diet, highlighting for example differences required in advising the older population.
- 5.8 The TFG particularly welcomed the inclusion of improving 'emotional resilience' as a future Public Health priority as this issue had been highlighted throughout the TFG's investigation. The group emphasised the need for support in communities as well as particular support for Elected Members given the emotional resilience required due to their front-facing role, as well as to support their constituents. The group discussed the importance of mental health being 'everyone's business' and as a consideration in all Council decisions.
- 5.9 The TFG welcomed the work being done and are aware of funding challenges for all services, however raised particular concern regarding budgets being cut in relation to health prevention. The group highlighted the importance of working with partner agencies to ensure work is focused on preventative services rather than remedial services, particularly given how costly this could become in the long term.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 During the investigation, to support the promotion of stop smoking services in Barnsley, the TFG wrote to every Barnsley Councillor to request that they displayed the 'Yorkshire Smokefree' poster which was provided, in their local area, to support

our communities being aware of available services. Throughout the investigation, the TFG members made a number of suggestions and recommendations regarding the work being undertaken as well as plans being considered which the services were able to consider both currently as well as part of future work. In addition to these suggestions, the TFG recommends the following:

6.2 Recommendation 1: Targeted communications work is done with Elected Members, School Governors and Barnsley Alliance to promote public health messages and initiatives in schools

The TFG are aware of the challenges of 'cold calling' schools to encourage them to engage with initiatives. For example, given Elected Members' involvement in local school, with many sitting on governing bodies, these channels should be utilised by the service to promote key schemes to our schools such as 'The Daily Mile'. Succinct information regarding particular Public Health schemes as well as advice regarding the Ofsted requirements surrounding evidence of for example, sports premium grant spend, should be provided to key contacts to share with local schools.

6.3 Recommendation 2: Services to explore the use of carbon monoxide measuring devices to discourage parents from smoking

Given examples of this being used effectively, such as the 'Babyclear' scheme in Teesside, the TFG recommends that work is done to investigate the success of this and other schemes and consider their use in Barnsley.

6.4 Recommendation 3: Area Councils purchase tooth brushing packs via the Council's Public Health service

As the Public Health service has access to low-cost tooth brushing packs which also include an advice leaflet; it is recommended that when Area Councils undertake health promotion work, such as at galas, they purchase these rather than creating their own. This will ensure efficient use of resources and provision of consistent messages on oral health.

6.5 Recommendation 4: An Elected Member from the OSC sits on the Council's Oral Health Improvement Action Group

To ensure continued Elected Member input into work to improve oral health in the borough, it is recommended that an OSC member sits on this group. This will help to continue to drive this agenda as well as to support the OSC in following-up investigations it has undertaken.

6.6 Recommendation 5: Specific communication activity is undertaken to raise awareness regarding access to dental services

The TFG highlighted the lack of knowledge in communities regarding accessing dental care. This includes communities knowing that they can access any dental practice in the borough and this does not just need to be their closest service, unlike other NHS services. The TFG also recommend that specific information is provided to job centres in Barnsley and promoted through those networks to advise people of the free dental care available to them whilst on Jobseekers Allowance.

6.7 **Recommendation 6: An All Member Information Briefing (AMIB) is held on ‘emotional resilience’**

Both in supporting emotional resilience in Elected Members as individuals, as well as to aid them in supporting their communities, the TFG suggest that an AMIB is held to provide advice and support to Members in dealing with challenges they face in their role, as well as how they can support others.

6.8 **Recommendation 7: In Council Cabinet Reports, the section on ‘Implications for Local People/Service Users’ makes specific reference to ‘Mental Wellbeing’ implications of decisions**

Given the importance of mental health being ‘everyone’s business’, the TFG felt it important to highlight how Council decisions can influence mental wellbeing within our communities. This will help to prompt officers and decision makers to think about the wider implications of decisions and whether additional considerations or mitigations need to be in place.

6.9 **Recommendation 8: Health and Social Care services consider how they can all focus investment in preventative and early help services**

The TFG are aware of budget challenges for all organisations, however are conscious that preventative interventions help support the management of demand on services including the NHS. To help improve the health of the Barnsley population both now and in the future, the TFG would welcome all relevant organisations to consider this as a priority.

6.10 **Recommendation 9: Communication activity is accessible to all Barnsley communities including those with disabilities and where English is an additional language**

Throughout the investigation the TFG highlighted the importance of effective communication and consideration of those with disabilities or where English is an additional language, to ensure that services are promoted to and accessible to all Barnsley communities. As appropriate, consultation should be undertaken with the Council’s Equality Forums regarding materials and a variety of communication methods should be used.

The TFG would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who provided information and assisted with the TFG’s investigation.

7. Implications for local people / service users

7.1 The investigation undertaken by the TFG as well as the recommendations made are in support of improving health outcomes for people in Barnsley. The TFG recognises the importance of people’s physical and mental health in all aspects of their life and the negative impacts poor wellbeing can have on individuals and communities.

8. Financial implications

8.1 There are no specific financial implications, although in responding to the recommendations in the report, the financial implications of these would need to be fully assessed by the appropriate services responding.

9. Employee implications

- 9.1 There are no specific employee implications, although in responding to the recommendations in the report, the employee implications of these would need to be fully assessed by the appropriate services responding.

10. Communications implications

- 10.1 Throughout the investigation, the TFG consistently highlighted the importance of effective communication in relation to key health messages and the availability of services. This includes both clarity of information contained within resources, as well as utilising specific communication channels to ensure messages reach target audiences.

11. Consultations

- 11.1 Consultations have taken place with the Public Health TFG Members, Councillor Jim Andrews, Council Officers Carrie Abbott, Diane Lee, Kaye Mann, Rebecca Clarke, Julie Tolhurst, Adam Norris, Anthony Devonport and the Senior Management Team.

12. The Corporate Plan and the Council's Performance Management Framework

- 12.1 As outlined in the Corporate Plan, the three priorities for Barnsley are: a thriving and vibrant economy, strong and resilient communities; and citizens achieving their potential. Positive physical and mental wellbeing are central to achieving all of these priorities, therefore it is essential the Council and its partner organisations work together to support these aims.

13. Promoting equality & diversity and social inclusion

- 13.1 The TFG is keen to ensure that all Council services and activities are accessible to all its communities. Throughout the TFG's involvement in this work they have specifically referred to making sure that services and communication materials are accessible to those with disabilities as well as those where English may be an additional language.

14. Tackling the impact of poverty

- 14.1 Encouraging people to have healthy lifestyles can help in tackling the impact of poverty, for example by preventing spend on smoking related items and alcohol. With regards to smoking alone, it is recognised that 32% of households with a smoker in Barnsley fall below the poverty line. If these smokers were to quit, 2140 households would be lifted out of poverty.

15. Tackling Health Inequalities

- 15.1 There are large health inequalities between Barnsley and England and within Barnsley itself. Improving health and reducing health inequalities will help local people to reach their full potential. The investigation undertaken by the TFG and recommendations made are in support of improving health outcomes across the

borough; with recognition that additional work is required in particular communities to help address health inequalities.

16. Risk management issues

16.1 This issue relates to the following risks currently logged on the Council's Strategic Risk Register (SRR), as follows:

- 3026 – 'Failure to achieve a reduction in Health inequalities within the Borough'
- 3047 – 'Failure to protect the health of the population from preventable health threats'

16.2 It is likely the recommended activities detailed in this report will contribute further to the effective mitigation of these risks, and it would be appropriate for any follow-up report regarding community engagement to be cognisant of these risks.

17. Glossary

AMIB – All Member Information Briefing
BMBC – Barnsley Metropolitan borough Council
OSC – Overview and Scrutiny Committee
TFG – Task and Finish Group

18. Background papers

- Public Health Strategy 2016-18 Cabinet Report (Cab.16.12.2015/6):
<http://barnsleymbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s6332/Public%20Health%20Strategy%20Report.pdf>
- Public Health Strategy 2016-18:
<http://barnsleymbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s6333/Public%20Health%20Strategy.pdf>

Report Author: Anna Marshall Date: 9th March 2018