

## **PUBLIC HEALTH STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN UPDATE**

**Cabinet Member(s):** Cllr Margaret Squires and Cllr Colin Slade  
**Responsible Officer:** Simon Newcombe, Public Health and Professional Services Manager

**Reason for Report:** To provide a further update on progress of the Public Health Plan

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the information in the report be noted and updated by the Public Health Manager in future PDG meetings

**Relationship to Corporate Plan:** The Public Health Strategy and Action Plan align with and directly support a number of key themes in the Corporate Plan as follows:

- *Priority 2 Homes: Aim 2 – Working with Private Landlords to improve housing conditions*
- *Priority 3: Aim 1 – Work with local communities to encourage them to support themselves*
- *Priority 3 Community: Aim 3 - Increase physical activity and promote health and wellbeing*

The production and delivery of a Public Health Plan is also a priority project within the Corporate Plan.

**Financial Implications:** No direct revenue budget impacts however the strategy is linked and dependent upon existing service budgets and planning obligations internally in addition to limited ear-marked reserves and external resourcing from relevant organisations to achieve outcomes on specific projects. Where relevant, further information is provided in the body of the report.

**Legal Implications:** None

**Risk Assessment:** Failure to address health inequalities has wider implications. Mid Devon District Council should aim to get public health value out of services that are already being delivered. The Health and Social Care Act (2012) places a duty on upper tier local authorities (Devon County Council) to work to improve the health of their population. In doing so they must work collaboratively with District Councils to support our development of district level locality action plans. The Devon Health and Wellbeing Board will work through this collaborative approach to oversee the impact of local actions on the range of health and wellbeing outcomes and progress in relation to reducing health inequalities.

**Equality Impact Assessment:** At the heart of the public health plan is a commitment to reduce inequalities and thereby improve health outcomes. There are no protected characteristics under equality legislation negatively impacted by the plan itself.

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Members will note the previous update on the Public Health Plan 2017-19 provided at the January 2017 Community PDG meeting. Whilst reiterating some information on the context and background to the plan, this report is designed to provide an update on those plan actions that have progressed since the earlier report.
- 1.2 There have been no significant deviations from existing project costs supported by the circa £7k ear-marked reserve (ERM) fund across the plan, as outlined within the previous report. Any additional costs or external funding linked to new projects are outlined below.
- 1.3 The Public Health Plan 2017-19 identifies four key priorities for the Mid Devon area based upon data provided by Public Health (Devon). These priorities are:
  - Prevention of cardiovascular disease and cancer
  - Decent high quality housing
  - Emotional/mental health and resilience
  - Air quality

## 2.0 Prevention of cardiovascular disease and cancer

- 2.1 As outlined previously, Public Health Services developed new opportunities with Mid Devon Leisure and provided start-up funding to Mid Devon Leisure to implement the **Active Start (GP referral)** scheme. This program uses the qualified cardio trained personnel to provide a 12 week program to patients who have been referred by a GP or other health professional.
- 2.2 The Active Start scheme provides specialised, supervised exercise sessions for anyone whose fitness and health conditions can be improved by regular exercise. The program is being offered at a special introductory discounted monthly price or pay as you go reduced rates. Since commencing earlier this year across the three leisure centres there is now an average of 40 participants each week.
- 2.3 It is suitable for a wide range of people and conditions, including those who may not have exercised before, or not for a very long time. Examples of conditions include: high blood pressure, diabetes, mental health issues and

arthritis. More information on the scheme found on the Council website here:  
<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/public-health/>

- 2.4 Reducing the amount of sugar in our diet is one of the key factors in maintaining a healthy weight and can be instrumental in reducing the risk of diabetes and tooth decay. Public Health Services are soon to embark on an **audit of food and drink that is sold at our Leisure centres**. Working with all stakeholders (suppliers, staff and customers) we hope to gradually change the food offer to products that are lower in sugar.
- 2.5 On behalf of the Council, the Public Health Officer has been attending a series of partner meetings with **Active Devon** who are leading on a major funding application to **Sport England**. The first stage of the process has been completed and the bid has now been accepted to the next stage. The theme of the current round is 'Connecting Actively with Nature' and is supported by a range of organisations with facilities and resources such as National parks, Devon Local Nature Partnership. The focus of this campaign is inactive people aged 55+.
- 3.0 Decent high quality housing
- 3.1 The Central Heating Fund (CHF), whereby eligible residents had a new central heating system installed, has now come to an end. Since its inception in 2014, 43 residents of Mid Devon have had a new heating system installed. This equates to 11% of all installs across Devon.
- 3.2 Public Health Services also represent Council at the **Cosy Devon** partnership meetings. Since the end of the CHF scheme the partnership has endorsed a new energy advice service operated by Agility ECO who were also partners in the CHF scheme. The **Local Energy Advice Program (LEAP)** provides advice and energy saving measures to eligible residents. Such measures include LED light bulbs, draught proofing, pipe lagging, radiator foils, heating controller checks, and advice on tariffs. The scheme is soon expected to secure funding for another 4 years. All services are free to eligible residents.

More information is available on the Council website here:  
<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/housing/local-energy-advice-program/>

- 3.3 Following a verbal update at the previous Community PDG meeting, implementation of the **energy switching scheme** is now well advanced and under final contract review. The scheme is also run by Agility ECO and its partner UK Power. It will be accessible through the Council's website and offers either on-line or call centre assisted advice on how to get the best electricity and gas deal (where applicable). The scheme is OFGEM approved and Council derives a small income for each referral.

- 3.4 It is anticipated that the energy switching scheme will go live shortly and further verbal update will be provided when this report is presented to the PDG.
- 3.5 Both of the abovementioned schemes are part of our ongoing efforts to eliminate fuel poverty and reduce illness associated with poorly insulated and heated homes. They also form part of our broader on-going report to the Government under our Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) obligations. The HECA return was most recently completed in April 2017 and is available to view on the Council website here:  
<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/media/1207/mid-devon-heca-progress-report-2017.pdf>
- 3.6 We are also aiming to review an evaluation report (due in September) following completion of research by the University of Exeter on housing and health mapping. This has the potential to inform future targeted actions and activities by the Private Sector Housing team within Public Health.
- 4.0 Emotional/mental health and resilience
- 4.1 **Seated exercise** classes for the elderly, isolated and lonely, and people suffering from dementia, that are requiring increased physical activity commenced in February at Cridton. The groups are coordinated by Upstream and supported with equipment purchased by Active Devon and start-up funding from Public Health Services to cover the trainer costs. The group runs twice every month from the Boniface Centre in Cridton. A food voucher to support the group is provided by Tesco.
- 4.2 Uptake of the classes has been good with broad variety of attendees coming from a mix of town and rural areas across the western-side of the district. There has also been interest from care workers in local care homes who have enquired and/or attended a session to learn how similar sessions could be run in their centres.
- 4.3 The group leaders have had to pitch the exercises to a varied group of disabilities: wheel chair users, dementia, Huntington's disease, head injury, blindness, mental ill-health and other age related stiffness and ailments. The sessions have provided a potential opportunity for respite for domestic carers.
- 4.4 Whilst the project is promoted around fun exercise, it has very much been able to increase people's engagement with others, improve mood and increase social networks. To begin with the groups were not very communicative with each other however the games are popular and break the ice. This has helped people relate to each other and lift mood.
- 4.5 On a Devon-wide basis with neighbouring districts and the County Council we are working with the Director of Public Health to jointly support and signpost

the **Making Every Contact Count** initiative in order to maximise engagement activities. This initiative supported by the Dept. of Health and NHS is an interactive learning resource to help people develop knowledge and understanding so that every contact counts by asking others about their health and wellbeing. Roll out is funded by Health Education England.

- 4.6 We are also working with the HR team to help raise awareness of mental health with our workforce and to signpost mental health first-aid resources.

## 5.0 Air Quality

- 5.1 The Mid Devon area currently has two Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) at Crediton and Cullompton.

- 5.2 Public Health Services are responsible for providing an **Air Quality Action Plan** every 4 years. The plan is currently being updated and outlines the actions we will take to improve air quality in Mid Devon 2017-21. It is being developed in partnership with number of key internal and external stakeholders in accordance with parallel statutory requirements on the Council. These require us to work towards Air Quality Strategy (AQS) objectives under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 and relevant regulations in order to meet the requirements of the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) regime.

- 5.3 Further measures will be included in the Air Quality Action Plan to continue the improving trend within the AQMAs and address remaining hot-spot areas. The plan will also be critical to the future protection of public health and the prevention of new management areas. This encompasses the management of additional vehicle and stationary emissions arising directly from new major developments across the district including the Cullompton area proposals in particular. A strong emphasis will be placed on a preventative, design-led approach to low emissions strategies and sustainable development underpinned by the relevant transport infrastructure.

- 5.4 The Air Quality Action Plan is discussed in more detail in a separate item on this PDG agenda which includes a preliminary draft of the plan, presently subject to on-going consultation and further development.

- 5.5 Last year MDDC Public Health Services joined with the other Greater Exeter districts to submit a DEFRA grant bid for a range of measures to address air quality. Though unsuccessful some of these measures (EV charging, e-bike scheme) have been included in a new bid for **EU regional development funding (ERDF)**. An Expression of Interest has been submitted by a new partnership called **SENIGE** and led by Devon County Council. The partnership will be informed in June if it has passed the first stage of the process.

- 5.5 In collaboration with the Economic Development Officer, Public Health has also recently begun work with another Greater Exeter forum – the **Low Carbon Task Force**. This group provides a mechanism for collaborating around the delivery of a range of low carbon projects and there may be opportunities to co-manage carbon dioxide emissions and other polluting emissions (which impact on local air quality) within relevant projects.

**Contact for more Information:** Kevin Swift (Public Health Officer), 01884 244625 [kswift@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:kswift@middevon.gov.uk) and Simon Newcombe (Public Health and Professional Services Manager) 01884 244615 [snewcombe@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:snewcombe@middevon.gov.uk)

**Circulation of the Report:**

Cabinet Members with responsibility for Public Health (Cllr Margaret Squires) and Community Well-being (Cllr Colin Slade)  
Members of the Community Policy Development Group  
Leadership Team

**List of Background Papers:**

Mid Devon Public Health Plan 2016-19  
SENIGE EU bid document (available on request)  
Active Devon Sport England bid document (available on request)