



Report to Cabinet

Subject White Papers
“Choosing Health – Making Healthy Choices Easier” – Department of Health
“Building Communities – Beating Crime” – Home Office

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1. Purpose of the Report

- § To inform members of key elements of these two White Papers recently published by the Government, and of the potential implications for the Borough Council and its partners.

2. Background

2.1 – The Government has recently published two significant White Papers, on Public Health (“Choosing Health – Making healthy choices easier”, published by the Department of Health) and Policing Reform (“Building Communities – Beating Crime”, published by the Home Office).

2.2 – Though both primarily cover the work of other agencies working in the Borough, they also impact on the work of the Council, directly and through its partnership working with the Gedling Partnership and the Gedling Community Safety Partnership.

2.3 – The proposals set out in the Papers may also offer opportunities for the Council to progress its own priorities.

3. Proposals

3.1 - “Choosing Health – Making healthy choices easier”,

3.1.1 – This White Paper, which runs to 207 pages, focuses on public health and health improvement. It sets out the Government’s view on action needed to address growing health inequalities and choices for a healthier lifestyle.

3.1.2 – The full report and related documents, including a 19 page Executive Summary, is available on the Department of Health website (www.dh.gov.uk/publications).

3.1.3 - The main underlying principles in the report are: -

- Informed choice – to allow people to make their own decisions on issues that affect their health.
- Personalisation – by tailoring support to reflect the realities of individual’s lives.
- Working together – through partnerships across communities and including local authorities, the NHS, business, advertisers, retailers, the media, faith organisations and others.

3.1.4 - The key priorities, some of which have received widespread media attention, are: -:

- Reducing smoking prevalence, including proposals to introduce legislation restricting smoking in enclosed public places and more effective action on under-age sales.
- Reducing obesity and improving diet, with plans to have clear food labelling by 2006 and restrictions on advertising to children by 2007.
- Increasing exercise, with a focus on school sports, cycling and a roll out of the Local Exercise Action Pilots (LEAPs), which have been available only to areas in receipt of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding until now.
- Encouraging ‘sensible’ drinking, with information on cans and bottles as on cigarette packs, as well as action on under-age sales.
- Improving sexual health with a new national campaign aimed at younger men in particular – to include improved Genito-Urinary Medicine services and targeted work in areas of high teenage pregnancy.
- Improving mental health, via support for self management and access to work.

3.1.5 – There are a range of potential implications for District Councils, relating to service provision and wider community leadership roles. On the latter, the Council’s contribution to the Gedling Partnership will be of key importance in bringing together all the key players to deliver programmes and actions. The proposals have already been given initial consideration at the Gedling

Partnership's Health and Well-Being Sub-Group and at Executive level. It is expected that many of the detailed proposals arising from the paper will be best delivered through this Partnership, and discussions with the PCT (as lead body for Public Health) are ongoing.

3.1.6 – However, there are also potential practical implications for the Council in service delivery terms. These may include: -

- Strengthening working with the PCT on Local Exercise initiatives.
- Continued provision of accessible parks and open spaces, and of facilities to encourage cycling, walking and similar activities.
- Provision of out-of-school community recreation facilities for young people.
- Work with the Community Safety partnership to restrict under-age tobacco and alcohol sales.
- Continued improvement of housing stock and housing adaptations to provide healthier living conditions.
- A potential future enforcement/licensing/regulation role in relation to smoke free public buildings.

3.1.7 – It is understood that the Department of Health will publish a Delivery Plan for the White Paper in early 2005. This will include more details on research to strengthen the evidence for public health action and narrowing the health inequalities gap; improving the information base; workforce capacity building and development and the mechanisms for delivering the health improvement at local level, via Local Strategic Partnerships.

3.1.8 – It is also likely that aspects of future funding, delivery and targeted outcomes in these areas will be addressed through Local Area Agreements, initial details are also expected to be reported to this meeting.

3.1.9 - Thanks are expressed to Dr Mary Corcoran, Director of Public Health at Gedling PCT, whose work has contributed significantly to the compilation of this report.

3.2 - “Building Communities – Beating Crime”

3.2.1 – This White Paper focuses on improvements to policing to build safety, security and stability into communities.

3.2.2 – The full report and related documents, including an Executive Summary, is available on a dedicated website (www.policereform.gov.uk).

3.2.2 – The stated objectives of the paper are: -

- To spread neighbourhood policing to every community with improved police responsiveness and customer service.
- To further modernise the police workforce to ensure it is equipped to deliver these changes.
- Greater involvement of communities and citizens in determining how their communities are policed.

3.2.3 – The third of these is of particular relevance to local authorities. The Government proposes an increased role for councillors and local authority Community Safety Officers “to give them an explicit remit to provide a focal point for the local community in terms of dealing with those agencies responsible for community safety.” It proposes mechanisms to trigger actions if communities do not receive the standards set out in “contracts” with the Police Service.

3.2.4 – On specific local authority roles, the paper proposes a strengthened role for Police Authorities in ensuring effective delivery of policing, and improved relationships between Police Authorities, Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) and local communities. It also proposes that, as part of this strengthening, local authority Cabinet members with responsibility for Community Safety should sit on Police Authorities (though it is not yet clear how this will be applied in two-tier local government areas, where not all councils will be represented).

3.2.5 – The paper also launched a review of the role and function of CDRPs, which is now in progress and is due to report by the end of January 2005. The review will look at a wide range of issues including: -

- Role of CDRPs
- Accountability
- Inspection
- Community Engagement
- Membership
- Mainstreaming of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (section 17)
- Working in two-tier local government areas
- Possible CDRP mergers
- Boundaries
- Drugs and Alcohol, including links between CDRPs and Drug Action Teams
- Work with other local agencies
- Funding and commissioning of services
- Data sharing

3.2.6 – Potential implications for the Borough Council and the CDRP here could be quite significant.

3.2.7 – The Gedling Community Safety Partnership has given detailed consideration to the proposals and is looking to address the issues set out within the paper. The outcome of the CDRP review will have a key impact on its response and it is therefore difficult to make firm plans until the result of that review are known. However, it does seem likely that work already carried out to link the work of Police Community Support Officers and Neighbourhood Wardens, and the recent appointment of Community Projects Officers, will leave the Partnership well placed to address Neighbourhood Policing developments, where its work is already ahead of the field.

3.2.8 The Government has also published two separate leaflets summarising the effect of the changes for the public and for those employed in the Police service. Copies of these are attached at **Appendix A**.

4. Resource Implications

4.1 – It is as yet too early to say what the resource implications of these proposals will be for the Council. It is possible that additional responsibilities will be placed on the Council (for example, through the possible role in enforcing smoke-free public buildings) but the implications of these are not yet known.

4.2 – However, it does seem likely that issues raised in both papers will impact on the negotiation and development of Local Area Agreements in 2005/06 and beyond, which will have resource implications.

5. Recommendation

Members are **recommended** to note the report.