

Sunderland City Council, Full Council Meeting 23 09 2020

Question from Laura Murrell & Pamela Wortley, KONP Sunderland & District

NHS Privatisation and the Integrated Care System

What is Sunderland Council doing to prevent the steady and insidious NHS privatisation process and how will you ensure that the local "Integrated Care System" involves changes based on health and social need, rather than being driven by financial considerations that lead to further outsourcing to the private sector?

Answer from Councillor Doctor Geoffrey Walker, Portfolio Holder for Healthy City

Thankyou Mr Mayor.

Whilst decisions on the processes used to commission services in the NHS are a matter of national policy and law, Sunderland City Council, as a Labour controlled authority, would not, of course, support systematic privatisation of the NHS.

Sunderland City Council is an active member of the Local Government Association; the New Local Government Network; The Co-Operative Council's Innovation Network; and The Community Wealth Building Network and strives in a particular way to achieve the best possible quality of service delivery for our residents through the application of co-operative values and principles.

No more is this most evident than in the new approach to health and social care, Mr Mayor.

Within the integrated partnership our delivery mechanisms with 'Sunderland Care and Support' and 'Altogether Better' are widely admired by other Local Authorities. We are committed to a forward integrated commissioning of services which makes use of our available resources and aims to avoid the extraction of wealth through existing anchor institutions, such as the NHS.

We have recently created the post of Executive Director of Public Health and Integrated Commissioning and the first appointee to this post will commence working with us at the beginning of November. This is an innovative approach which aims to tackle our limited integrated care agenda and take it to a new level.

In terms of my own portfolio, Mr Mayor, as Cabinet Member for Healthy City, I've been instrumental in establishing the North East Health and Wellbeing Chairs Network during lockdown which aims to monitor the work of the Integrated Care System and the various integrated care partnerships. Recently, I also wrote a paper entitled "Resetting the Health and Social Care System", setting out a new vision and a seven point plan for the delivery of integrated health and social care for the city. This paper has drawn a lot of local, regional and national attention and will form the basis of a workshop by the Local Government Association in October.

I think our involvement in integrated health and social care in this way, clearly demonstrates our commitment to an agenda of collaboration and co-operation aimed at avoiding wealth extraction by the private sector.