

**HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**14 JANUARY 2026**

**MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2026/27-2029/30**

**MINUTE EXTRACT**

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Public Health and the Director of Corporate Resources which provided information on the proposed 2026/27 to 2029/30 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as it related to Public Health. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 9', is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussions the following points were noted:

- (i) There was a typographical error at paragraph 10 of the report which should have said "The impact of what is effectively a direction to increase expenditure on the prevention, treatment and recovery from drugs and alcohol misuse of 10% year on year..."
- (ii) Members welcomed that this time the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) had given provisional Public Health Grant allocations for the next three years rather than the usual one-year settlement.
- (iii) The DHSC had specified ring fences within the ring-fenced Public Health Grant to be spent on drugs and alcohol treatment, recovery and prevention, and smoking cessation. These figures were included in the report at Table 2 - Net Budget 2026/27. The exact spending on those ring-fenced areas was largely prescribed nationally and had to be used to meet Key Performance Indicators. In response to a query from members as to what would happen if this money was not spent and whether it could be transferred to a different Public Health budget stream within the Council, it was explained that there was a risk that DHSC could ask for the money to be returned or they could reduce the amount given to the County Council in future allocations. This had happened to local authorities elsewhere in the country with regards to smoking cessation funding.
- (iv) An amount of approximately £2 million of the Public Health grant was used to commission, by way of service level agreements, health improving elements of services in other departments that fulfilled the public health grant requirements and the priorities of those departments. Newton Impact was carrying out an Efficiency Review of all the County Council's services and spending to identify savings to help meet the budget gap. Positive conversations had taken place between the Public Health department and Newton Impact regarding how Public Health could contribute to the County Council's savings. It was not expected that Public Health would transfer funding directly from its budget into the budgets of other County Council departments. However, it was hoped that

the work of the Public Health department would help reduce the demand on services provided by other departments within the County Council. For example, the Public Health work regarding frailty and falls prevention could help reduce the demand on adult social care.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report and information now provided be noted;
- (b) That the comments now made be forwarded to the Scrutiny Commission for consideration at its meeting on 28 January 2026.