

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

20 July 2011

SCRUTINY OF HEALTH COMMITTEE – STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The activities of the Scrutiny of Health Committee that I would like to highlight since the last County Council are set out below.

North Yorkshire Review of Health Services 2011

1. The Strategic Health Authority has commissioned a review of healthcare services across North Yorkshire. The review is being led by Professor Hugo Mascie-Taylor.
2. At a briefing for the whole Committee on 20 May 2011 Hugo set out the background to the review and the issues facing the health economy in the County, referring in particular to North Yorkshire being a sparsely populated rural area, we are a relatively healthy population as reflected in the funding formula for NHS services and that we have good quality health services and outcomes delivered by strong general practice. But NHS North Yorkshire and York (NHS NY&Y) has consistently encountered financial difficulties resulting in budget shortfalls having to be overcome by the Yorkshire and the Humber Strategic Health Authority organising the borrowing of funding from the surrounding health economies. As part of the NHS changes SHAs will be abolished so the facility to move funds between PCTs and regions will disappear and unless action is taken now GPs, who will take over the commissioning from the PCT, will inherit a health system that is significantly and increasingly out of balance.
3. Hugo's report will be published shortly and at the briefing he gave an undertaking to return to the Committee to discuss his findings and recommendations in detail with us. I am hoping to agree a date with him for later this month.

Adult Mental Health and Older Peoples Mental Health Services in Craven

5. Representatives from the Bradford District Care Trust attended our Committee meeting on 17 June to seek our initial views on plans to restructure their older people's mental health and adult mental health in-patient services. The aims of the review are to deliver:
 - an ageless model of care on the in-patient wards;
 - a model of care for older people which responds to their diagnosis and need and not just their age;
 - making maximum use of in-patient beds;
 - improve the quality of older people in-patient provision.

4. The proposals include reducing the number of in-patient beds and rationalising the number of locations from which the services are provided in the Airedale and Bradford area. This includes moving the Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) from Airedale Hospital to Lynfield Mount Hospital in Bradford.
5. As NHS NY&Y resident's use of the PICU is limited NHS NY&Y has no objections to this Unit moving to Lynfield Mount Hospital. NHS NY&Y and Craven GPs are primarily concerned about the proposed geographical location of the older people's in-patient wards for patients with mental health disorders such as Alzheimer's disease being in Bradford and the distance carers and family members will have to travel to visit people who are in receipt of care in the in-patient units particularly as public transport services in the area is limited.
6. A three month formal consultation will be launched starting in August so we will be returning to these issues in more detail at our meeting in September which I am planning to hold in Skipton.

Ryedale and Whitby Enhanced Community Services Pilots

7. Following the publication of the National Clinical Advisory Team (NCAT) report and the Board meeting of NHS NY&Y on 26 April the objective of our meeting on 17 June was to hear the level of progress that had been made towards reopening the beds on both the Ryedale Ward at Malton Hospital and on the Abbey Ward at Whitby Hospital.
8. Sue Metcalfe from NHS NY&Y informed us that the beds will be reopening later this month.
9. Patrick Crowley (Chief Executive, York Teaching Hospitals Foundation Trust) and Mike Proctor (Chief Executive, Scarborough and North East Yorkshire NHS Trust) informed us that they welcomed the re-opening of the beds at both hospitals and endorsed the recommendation in the NCAT report that a strategic vision was needed for the two community hospitals. If facilities could be improved at both hospitals they believed a greater range of patients could be treated more locally. They commented that a significant number of patients at Scarborough and York hospitals did not require secondary care and could be better managed in a community setting. We heard how there is potential to develop a new model of care that was more affordable, would relieve pressure on Scarborough & York hospitals and would be better for patients.
10. Mike did, however, announce that the use of the operating theatres in both Whitby and Malton Hospitals would be suspended from week commencing 20 June 2011 on two counts – inadequate ventilation and risks of infection.
11. We accepted that the outcome from the review being undertaken by Professor Hugo Mascie-Taylor will be a major factor in considering the long term future of both hospitals and decisions upon whether the theatres will reopen and if so when.

Merger of Scarborough & North East Yorkshire NHS Trust and the York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

12. At the meeting on 17 June we also heard how the merger is progressing on two distinct work streams – the due diligence aspects of the merger and secondly, integration of services. It was emphasised to us that the work on due diligence is actually of secondary importance – the more important issue being to maintain a viable Scarborough Hospital with essential core services and at the same time ensure that services at York Hospital are not diluted. Demand for services at York Hospital is increasing so the merger is seen a "win-win" for both hospitals and the communities they serve. We also heard that even if the merger does not go ahead there will be closer working relationships between York and Scarborough Hospitals.

Review of Children's Congenital Heart Services in England

13. Finally I just want to confirm that I have written to the Yorkshire and Humber Specialist Commissioning Team highlighting how the Committee feels there are sufficient uncertainties to suggest that in actual fact the case for retaining all 3 centres in the North (Liverpool, Leeds and Newcastle) is more finely balanced than first appears. We strongly urged that before any final decision is made on units to be closed the scoring methodology, the threshold figure of 400 and the inherent risks in transporting seriously ill children across large distances are reviewed to ensure all relevant factors and options for the service are fully explored.
14. As a member of the Yorkshire and Humber Joint Committee that has been set up for this consultation I intend to raise these issues at its next meeting.

County Councillor Jim Clark
Chairman: North Yorkshire County Council Scrutiny of Health Committee

County Hall
Northallerton

11 July 2011