

North Yorkshire County Council

16 May 2012

Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairman's Statement

"The more we understand the more we can help"

1. Realignment of Work

The Committee has not met since I reported to the last Council so this opened up the option of looking at the timetabling of priorities for the coming year. In the short term it meant we could commit time and resources to vital work on the Carer's Strategy.

2. Carer's Strategy Consultation

The Committee has long prioritised carers in its work, quite rightly ensuring it features in everything we look at. Last year we assessed how the County Council supports carers. Although impressed by the scale of activity and the commitment of the Directorate, we scheduled further work on how carers are supported to take a full part in consultation exercises. So it was both timely and pleasing that we were able to help shape an exercise seeking to establish how the County Council makes it easier for carers to influence service planning and development. Drawing on our personal experiences and from what we hear in the communities we represent, we were able to:

1. Help the Directorate amend proposed questions to ensure that the right questions were asked.
2. Review the draft consultation plan and suggest changes to improve the list of consultees, thus making the consultation exercise fully inclusive.
3. Make suggestions for reviewing the process to ensure that maximum benefit can be gained so the exercise helps improve carer's services.

The timing is right to undertake this work because of the changing health landscape. Our comments reflect this; seeking reassurances that efforts would be made to secure GP buy-in and engagement through the client commissioning groups.

We endorsed the suggestion that consultation with young carers, although essential, should be a separate undertaking, tailored to their circumstances and carried out in ways that reflect their outlook and interests.

When the results of the consultation events are known later in the year we look forward to being involved in preparing a new Joint Strategy for carers in North Yorkshire with Health.

3. Future Agenda Items

Dementia will always be our business, for example we recently looked at commissioning arrangements for day services. The launch of the Prime Minister's Challenge puts Dementia where it belongs, right at the top of everybody's agenda. For us, it prompts a re-think about its prominence in our programme.

Initial consultations with providers, agencies and colleagues suggests we should concentrate on encouraging innovative caring and good practice that contribute to the aim of creating Dementia friendly communities.

4. Early Intervention and Prevention

We are about to start a review of the shape, impact and effectiveness of prevention and early intervention services that are being, or are planned to be delivered in North Yorkshire. Supporting people to remain independent is central to a strategic approach to wellbeing and to cost effective services. This involves preventing them from needing intensive care services by intervening early before they reach crisis point. Prevention is best achieved through community action alongside statutory services.

I reported last time that we will seek to assess how local support networks and user led organisations are being assisted to reduce isolation and vulnerability. I am though more convinced than ever of a need to broaden our scope to include 'are our commissioning arrangements nimble enough to reflect changed circumstances?' and bearing in mind the authority's responsibility to promote a social care market, 'how good are we at ensuring that providers, coming to terms with the personalisation agenda, are being supported to make innovative, best practice changes to how they go about their business?'

For the next Committee and over the coming months we therefore need to examine the relationship between commissioning and early intervention and prevention, and what that means for providers in the social care market.

**County Councillor Tony Hall
Chairman
Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

County Hall
Northallerton

2 May 2012

Background Documents: None