

## NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

10 OCTOBER 2012

## CARE AND INDEPENDENCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

## CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

**1. Local Account**

The local account is part of what is now called "sector led improvement", a regime rather different than the centralist, target monitoring of recent years. It is therefore more important than ever that Scrutiny has a role both in its preparation and reviewing feedback from the previous year's account. This challenge that Scrutiny brings demonstrates that overall, NYCC is taking its responsibilities seriously. The fact we were able to see this year's draft at an early stage emphasises that commitment.

Combining performance data and narrative, yet keeping a document short and accessible is no easy task. The Committee believed the Portfolio Holder and Directorate had got this awkward balance about right.

The decision to set the document out in accordance with the vision in the recently published Care and Support White Paper - Caring for our Future, works well. It makes it easier for service users, carers - the public in general to understand where NYCC believes it is doing well - Fair Access to Care for example, but it also provides appropriate insight into those services where NYCC and the people we support have identified room for improvement.

The overall "look" of the document is good, printing arrangements are sensible and the intended approach to circulation is designed to achieve as much coverage as possible.

Our conclusion was that this is a well-prepared document and we look forward to involvement in next year's Local Account on a similar basis.

**2. Joint Carers Strategy**

When we looked at last year's Local Account we flagged up an intention to review the support the County Council gives to carers, particularly how the Council and its partners help them engage and participate in planning services. So when Health and Adult Services and Children and Young People's Directorates, together with the PCT announced the decision to refresh the joint North Yorkshire Carers' Strategy, we readily accepted the invitation to be involved. This

entailed helping shape the approach to the engagement exercise and then reviewing the results.

This engagement has proved to be a positive experience with many carers coming forward with views and concerns. Having the Chair of the North Yorkshire Carers' Forum at our meeting was especially valuable in helping us fully understand carers' concerns. He explained the reasons why carers had identified some priorities in the engagement exercise, particularly, respite, short breaks and information. Reassuringly, his opinion was that these contributions from carers had influenced Directorate thinking.

The period set aside for comments ended after our meeting. I understand that only minor comments have been received. One of the key steps now will be securing health support. Getting that commitment when the landscape around reform and health provision is changing so rapidly is a challenge. Hearing therefore that a number of Clinical Commissioning Groups have already signed up to the Strategy is positive news. A major challenge remains: to ensure that all partners reach agreement on an implementation plan which is robust enough to secure the necessary resources and commitment.

### **3. Charging and Assessment of Client Contribution**

A new charging regime for social care services was implemented on 7 May 2011. The Committee decided to monitor progress periodically to assess the possible impact on services and individuals.

This review came at a time when the transitional protection arrangements are coming to an end. Our examination of the data confirmed the view which the Directorate has come to: namely that the change in approach has been effectively communicated. Whilst there has been some impact it does not appear to have affected the individual's decision in relation to their care needs.

The Committee has asked its Group Spokespersons to maintain a weather eye over this issue.

**COUNTY COUNCILLOR DON MACKENZIE**

**Chairman**

Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee

County Hall  
NORTHALLERTON

September 2012