

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL****24 JULY 2013****CARE AND INDEPENDENCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE****CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT**

1. It is a privilege to take over chairmanship of the Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee. I would like to thank my predecessor, Cllr Don Mackenzie, and all of the members of the previous committee for their fine work in the last council.
2. We opened our first meeting in sad circumstances, with the holding of a minute's silence for Margaret Hulme, a well-liked and respected county councillor of long standing. Margaret served as a member of this Scrutiny Committee and was a past chairman of the Social Services Committee. We remember Margaret for her determination to speak up for the rights and views of vulnerable people who need and use our services. She will be greatly missed.

Social Care and Independent Living Overview

3. Our first meeting started with an overview of issues facing the county from HAS Director Helen Taylor. The content was wide ranging, including such issues as health inequalities and need across the County, the complications around providing services in a rural area, the pressures on service delivery and budget and the national agenda in social care.
4. The spend by Health and Adult Services on social care support is the largest within the County Council's budget. As a scrutiny committee we have a crucial responsibility in terms of ensuring effective decision making. Helen's presentation helped us to set out key agenda items, including the following:

Fair Access to Care

5. A decision may well be taken to change the level at which people are eligible for care from 'Moderate' to 'Substantial'. The significance of this change is not to be underestimated. We intend to be a consultee during the decision making process and to review whatever conclusion is put before the Executive.

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6. We heard of the Government's proposals regarding capping of residential care costs, which clearly has implications for individuals, but will also have an impact upon the County Council's financial position.

### Care Charging

7. The Committee has long taken an interest in revisions to care charging and most likely, this will be subject to Portfolio Holder consideration later in the year. It is important that it features on our agenda at the appropriate time.

### Local Account 2012/13

8. The Local Account is an essential part of sector led improvement and must be an honest assessment of social care performance over the previous year. It also looks forward to the year ahead. It is our responsibility, as a Committee, to make sure that it is an accurate self-assessment and not a self-congratulatory. Although happy overall with the process of compiling this year's Local Account, the Committee wants to make sure that its involvement continues throughout that process before publication.

### Carer's Strategy

9. Reviewing last year's Local Account encouraged Members to take a particular interest in support for carers. The previous Committee reviewed the agreement reached with the then PCT which led to the adoption of a Joint Carer's Strategy. At our last meeting, we reviewed the joint implementation plan, which has been agreed by all Clinical Commissioning Groups and which we thought was sufficiently robust.
10. This is a two year plan and the Committee expects to review progress at the end of year one. It is important that we get first-hand views from carers themselves, which is why I intend to invite the Chairman of the North Yorkshire Carers Forum to our next meeting for an informal dialogue.

### Innovation Fund

11. We received an update on the progress of the Innovation Fund, which was set up to support priority areas for transformation within adult care and which show an innovative approach. This represents a significant investment by the Council in the voluntary sector and an opportunity to develop a range of low level schemes of care and support, despite significant pressures. It presents

a challenge for the voluntary sector in terms of changing services and demonstrating a strong value for money approach.

12. We heard of the proposals to engage a third party to undertake an evaluation process of the success of the schemes, which will also come before the Committee.

#### Safeguarding: Financial Abuse

13. Safeguarding is a range of activity aimed at upholding an adult's fundamental right to be safe, at the same time as respecting people's rights to make choices. All councillors share a responsibility for safeguarding, but scrutiny members in particular must ensure that arrangements for safeguarding of communities, particularly for vulnerable adults, are effective. We do this by a yearly review of the Annual Report of the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Board.
14. As part of raising the profile of safeguarding in the Committee's work programme, a sub-committee is to start on the examination of financial abuse of vulnerable adults in the County. The aim is for the task group to complete its work in time for the publication of the Board's Annual Report in the autumn. Timing on this might be too tight, however, so at the very least an interim report will be made available on this very important issue.

#### Representatives on the Committee

15. The Committee has agreed to recommend that its three co-opted members - two voluntary sector representatives and one from the independent care sector - be co-opted for a further four year term. These individuals bring a level of expertise and advice which the Committee greatly appreciates and has benefited from in the past.

**COUNTY COUNCILLOR PATRICK MULLIGAN**  
**Chairman**  
**Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**County Hall**  
**NORTHALLERTON**

**July 2013**