

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

21 May 2014

SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

(Incorporating Statements from Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairmen)

Annual Report on Overview and Scrutiny

The Annual Report on Overview and Scrutiny for 2013/14 is attached.

The Report which includes an annual statement from each of my fellow chairmen demonstrates that scrutiny continues to play a positive and influential role in the County Council. It is also testament to the commitment and enthusiasm from Non-Executive Members.

Individual Chairmen are invited to give a short introduction to their statement and to take questions from fellow County Councillors.

I commend the Annual Report to the County Council.

County Councillor Elizabeth Casling
Chairman: Scrutiny Board



Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report April 2013 – March 2014

May 2014

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NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report, April 2013 – March 2014

Foreword

This Scrutiny Annual Report is about looking back reviewing what overview and scrutiny has done over the past year. Each of the Chairmen has written a statement that summarises the work of their Committee. Our work is very wide ranging - policy development, and performance improvement and looking in detail at particular services. We also need to look forward so this report also highlights some of the work we will be doing over the coming year.

At all times we must be thinking about the impact on our customers and local communities and the County Council has a strong track record of delivering excellent services and its key priorities:

To:

- ensure good access for all;
- help people to live in safe communities;
- help all children and young people to develop their full potential;
- promote a flourishing economy;
- maintain and enhance our environment and heritage; and
- improve health and wellbeing and give people effective support when they need it.

But there are major challenges facing the Council as a result of reductions in Government funding. By the end of 2019 our funding will have reduced by almost £170mpa compared to funding levels in 2011 – a reduction of around 30%. The recently launched 2020 North Yorkshire savings and service modernisation initiative will underpin much of the Council's work to address this situation. I am pleased to report that the Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee is already involved in how 2020 North Yorkshire will be managed. Each relevant committee will be involved in specific service developments.

Scrutiny Board has an important role to play in terms of providing a forum for sharing ideas and best practice and co-ordinating the work of individual committees as they become involved in developments across the Council. A good example is how, working with the Director of Public Health, we have agreed a plan under which the relevant committee(s) will be involved in a range of Public Health initiatives. Overview and scrutiny will continue to work proactively and constructively with the Executive. Please read this annual review as it provides a glimpse into overview and scrutiny at NYCC.

Finally, to all those Members, officers, partners and external representatives that have assisted Overview and Scrutiny in the past year thank you for your hard work and invaluable contributions.

**County Councillor Liz Casling
Chairman Scrutiny Board**



Highlights and Achievements

Care and Independence

Scope:

The needs of vulnerable adults and older people and people whose independence needs to be supported by intervention from the public or voluntary sector.

At present, public expenditure reductions are setting the agenda at both the national and local government level. Tight control of budgets in local government is essential, but a good balance sheet must not be an end in itself. Over the course of the last year, the Committee scrutinised the manner in which decisions for making savings and improvements in the HAS budget were being undertaken. This included the county's forward strategies of a) diverting demand and encouraging communities to support service delivery; b) reducing demand by targeting prevention and intervention initiatives; c) improving health performance and promoting independence through such initiatives as the START (Re-ablement) programme; and d) managing demand by helping people, carers and families to play a bigger role in accessing such services as personalised budgets and direct payments.

When reviewing the proposal to change the level at which people become eligible for care from 'Moderate' to 'Substantial,' the Committee was pleased to see a renewed, vigorous commitment to the prevention strategy. This consultation showed that we can be more targeted in developing preventative measures and fostering community based services that deliver better outcomes, whilst still protecting the most vulnerable. Deferring or delaying the need for costly longer term services has benefits for both the individual and the local authority. Re-ablement does just that - which is why it was important, we believe, that any change in the eligibility threshold did not impede the increasing success of this service. We supported all the proposals in the consultation except one: the possibility of a charge being introduced for two care workers, where this is needed. It seemed to us that a relatively small number of people would be bearing a disproportionately high burden. For that reason, we were pleased that the Executive chose to support our recommendation that this element of the FACS proposal be withdrawn.

The results of the consultation process reaffirmed the Committee's view that much of our work is focussing on the right things, particularly when it comes to safeguarding. As part of raising the profile of safeguarding in the Committee's work programme, a sub-committee has embarked on an examination of financial abuse of vulnerable adults in the County.

Everyone has the right to the money and property that is legally theirs. Financial abuse is the theft or misuse of money or personal possessions, which involves an individual's resources being used to the advantage of another person. We are presently looking into:

- the extent of the problem of financial abuse against vulnerable adults;
- the range of strategic actions being undertaken to combat and reduce the threat;
- whether safeguarding processes are sufficiently developed and whether best practice is being followed;
- the manner in which preventative measures and responses are tailored to take into account the nature of the crime, the victim's relationship to the perpetrator, the level of vulnerability of the adult, and the potential impact on the vulnerable person.

The task group wants to complete its work in time for it to be considered for inclusion in the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Board's Annual Report.

The Local Account is now an essential part of sector-led improvement, and must be an honest assessment of social care performance over the previous year. This year the Committee had an opportunity to review, pass comment and make suggestions for any amendments, before it was published. We found the document well-written and accessible. It passed what for us was the pivotal test: it was not self-congratulatory, evidenced in part by the included case studies which described how the Directorate has learned from experience, and then improved practice.

Finally, I make no apologies for including in my report something to which my predecessors have also referred to in years past. County Councillor Shelagh Marshall reports to us once a year on the things that really matter to older people, and she continues to tirelessly battle to protect their interests. We are fortunate to have such a well-respected ambassador for older people. In what was her 14th report to Committee, Shelagh reiterated her commitment to engagement, and her determination to promote the campaign to reduce loneliness and isolation so that it is on everyone's agenda, ours especially.



**County Councillor Patrick Mulligan
Chairman Care & Independence O&SC**

Corporate and Partnerships

Scope:

The Council's corporate organisation and structure, resource allocation, asset management, procurement policy, people strategy, equality & diversity, performance management, communication and access to services.

Partnership working, community development, community engagement, community strategies and community safety. This Committee shall be the Crime & Disorder Committee for the purposes of Part 3 of the Police and Justice Act 2006.

For me this year has been a steep learning curve moving from being the Young People's Champion and listening to the cares and concerns of our young people as well as celebrating their achievements, to listening to the reports from officers and questions and comments from my fellow County Councillors on the Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee. From reports on property, procurement and policies to newspaper partnerships, community libraries and the workforce of the future our work has been varied.

The Committee keeps a watching brief on the County Council's property portfolio to ensure we are 'sweating our assets!' or in other words to make sure that property is used to its full potential. A review of the property portfolio, including how we manage our property, is underway so that the future requirements of the County Council are addressed and planned for. The contract with Jacobs will reach an end in the near future and we will be looking to future contracts and savings.

It is a sad reflection of the austere times we live in that the workforce in both schools and the County Council continues to reduce and it is surprising to see that despite these reductions recruitment continues particularly for frontline posts and sickness absence also remains relatively low. Innovative 'e tools' are helping managers pull live data from HR and Payroll Resourcelink system to ensure they have up to date information available providing them with an overview of their team.

Libraries continue to feature high on our agenda. We see libraries as a community space for community involvement and participation as well as a major contributor to the health and

wellbeing of both individuals and communities. They provide access to books promoting reading as an essential life skill impacting on learning and employment. They are the conduit for people to access the digital age by supporting communities and individuals to fully realise their potential via access to the opportunities provided on-line. The future brings with it a fresh look on how the library service is provided. We have already seen how successful our community run libraries have been and we will learn lessons from these for the future.

The scrutiny review this year is looking at how video conferencing could assist the County Council in increasing productivity and saving money whilst also reducing the need to travel for both Members and officers. This would also help us to reduce the carbon emissions as well as the time spent travelling. Just as an example we worked it out that if we could do our mid cycle briefing meetings via video conferencing (based on approximately 20 briefings a year) we could potentially save over 7,000 miles which equates to 182 hours on the road, 2.5 tonnes of carbon and over £2,800. However, in order for video conferencing to succeed and for the potential savings to be realised there has to be a culture change and a commitment from both officers and County Councillors to be proactive and to think first if a meeting can be done through video conferencing before looking at other solutions

Throughout the year we have seen the principles of the 'One Council' programme to Simplify, Standardise and Share running through the reports that we have considered. For example; the Committee could see that in simplifying our procurement processes and working in partnership with the North Yorkshire Procurement Service the County Council could ensure more robust challenge of traditional procurement practise and save the Council money; In standardising the way the County Council develops its policies and strategies duplication is reduced and clarity is attained whilst by sharing information on crime and disorder matters with our partners the Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner we assist in trying to make North Yorkshire an even safer place to live.

County Councillor Tim Swales
Chairman, Corporate and Partnerships O&SC



Scrutiny of Health

Scope:

To review any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of health services in the County with the aim of improving the health of local people and ensuring that their needs are considered as an integral part of the delivery and development of healthcare services.

To focus on action to achieve health improvement; to examine health care in the context of the wider determinants of health; to examine how health services address the needs of local communities; especially to address health inequalities; to ensure that local health and health related issues are being tackled jointly and in a co-ordinated way across agencies.

To contribute to the NHS's Quality Accounts initiative by providing commentaries to the NHS Trusts serving North Yorkshire on how they intend to improve the quality of the services they provide.

Over the last year the Committee has continued to be involved in a wide range of healthcare developments at a local level. Most of these have been brought forward by the Clinical Commissioning Groups - the level of engagement they are providing is far better than their

predecessor body, the primary care trust. We have also been involved directly with the hospital trusts locally and with issues at a regional level. The next few paragraphs give a flavour of our work.

The Hambleton, Richmondshire and Whitby Clinical Commissioning Group's (HWR CCG) led a formal consultation between September 2013 and November 2013 on proposals to change children's and maternity serves at the Friarage Hospital, Northallerton. On 27 February 2014 the CCG Board decided to go ahead with the option of replacing the existing 24/7 consultant-led services with a Paediatric Short Stay Assessment Unit and Midwifery Led Unit with full outpatient services and enhanced services in the community.

At our meeting on 14 March 2014 we were convinced that the HWR CCG had followed the Secretary of State's advice (following our referral of this matter to him at the end of 2012) in terms of process, but taking on board the views of local MPs and work by Richmondshire District Council, we decided to refer the proposals to the Secretary of State for a second time. We felt there was still a gulf in terms of what the HWR CCG is proposing and the services that the public wanted to see maintained. The Secretary of State subsequently referred the matter to the Independent Reconfiguration Panel to undertake an initial assessment and asked the Panel to report back to him by 15 May 2014.

We have also been involved with the HWR CCG on their two "Fit4TheFutute" initiatives. The first is focussing mainly on a new a vision for Whitby Hospital and the second is looking at how best to provide healthcare services to an aging population, including the need for more joined-up primary care, non-urgent care, community care and social care so that people can live independently in their own homes.

The Scarborough and Ryedale CCG has also been very much on the "front foot" in terms of engagement with the Committee, for instance, as part of its formal consultation on proposals for improving urgent care services in their area.

We worked closely with both the Airedale and Harrogate NHS Foundation Trusts in the run up to their inspections as part of the Care Quality Commission's inspection regime led by Professor Sir Mike Richards, Chief Inspector of Hospitals and announced last year.

We have also called on NHS England to come up with a transition plan for the phased withdrawal of the Minimum Practice Income Guarantee (MPIG), which took effect from 1 April 2014. The withdrawal of MPIG could undermine the viability of small practices so typical of rural areas.

Finally, at a regional level I have continued to represent North Yorkshire on the Yorkshire and Humber Joint Scrutiny Committee looking at the national review of cardiac surgery for all age groups. This review is looking at cardiac surgery for patients of all ages following the Secretary of State calling a halt to the original review of children's cardiac surgery in June 2013.

**County Councillor Jim Clark
Chairman Scrutiny of Health Committee**



Transport, Economy & Environment

Scope

Transport and communications infrastructure of all kinds, however owned or provided, and how the transport needs of the community are met.

Supporting business, economic regeneration and development and helping people develop their skills, including lifelong learning.

Sustainability, climate change strategy, countryside management, waste management, environmental conservation and enhancement, and cultural issues.

Flood and coastal erosion risk management

The work of the Committee over the last year has been varied - from apprenticeships to the performance of the highways maintenance contract, to the preparations for the Tour de France, and to the budget savings proposals relating to waste management and local bus services. These are by no means all the areas that we have covered. However the impact of further budget savings on service delivery now and in the future is a running theme through our work programme.

The reduction in bus subsidy is one such example. The Committee discussed the bus subsidy reduction proposals in detail at its meeting on 19 December 2013 following the end of the public consultation period, and in February in response to a call in of the Executive decision taken on 21 January this year to implement the proposals. The Committee has set up a task group to consider the access needs of communities in North Yorkshire and how these might best be met using a range of transport options. This will include looking at community-led solutions.

The condition of the highway network has been a preoccupying concern of the Committee. In July 2013 and in January this year the Committee scrutinised the progress that Ringway were making. Senior representatives from Ringway gave us an interim update on the performance of the Highways Maintenance Contract. We look forward to the introduction of a Member's portal to allow us to track the progress of planned and current works.

The draft Strategic Economic Plan produced by the York, North Yorkshire & East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership was broadly welcomed by the Committee at its meeting in October. This is because we recognise that if new businesses are to be attracted to the county a co-ordinated approach needs to be taken towards improving and building infrastructure.

In October we also discussed the arrangements for the North Yorkshire stage of the Tour de France, in particular the work that the County Council, district councils and Welcome to Yorkshire are doing in preparation. We were particularly pleased to hear about the ways in which businesses are being helped to get the most out of the event.

In a similar economic vein we were also heartened to hear about the range of apprenticeships that the County Council is providing and the leading role it has taken in terms of working with local employers and young people to increase take up of apprenticeships and improve the overall employability of young people. The Committee was of the view that the Council should continue to sustain its level of investment in apprenticeships.

County Councillor David Jeffels
Chairman Transport Economy & Environment O&SC



Young People

Scope:

The interests of young people, including education, care and protection and family support.

As the County Council's Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, we critically evaluate and constructively challenge both the work of the Children and Young People's Service and the decisions taken by the Executive and Senior Officers. In undertaking this task we hope that, as County Councillors, we are playing our part in looking to secure access to good and outstanding education for all children and young people in North Yorkshire whilst also supporting families in need. The Committee's work includes in-depth scrutiny reviews and our current scrutiny task group is looking at Online Safety of Children and Young People. Our wider work programme continues to be varied and I include here some examples of the reports and presentations the Committee have received.

- The key findings of the Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire (that took on board the views of over 16,000 children and young people) concluded that Year 6 pupils in North Yorkshire in 2012 are more positive about their school than in 2010. It seems that in 2012 a greater proportion of those who responded have high self-esteem, while secondary school pupils report that classes on drugs and sexual health are well received and in fact are their main source of information about these important subjects. Emerging issues included the fact that 74% of secondary school pupils worry about at least one problem 'quite a lot' or 'a lot' and year 10 pupils in rural areas were more likely to report having had sex, yet also had poorer knowledge about sexually transmitted infections than pupils in urban areas.
- Early Help and Child Protection is not merely about "early years": It is about intervening in a child's life early on. It involves services across CYPS and our partners in the Children's Trust. It also takes time for early intervention services to be able to demonstrate effectiveness in a quantitative way. More than 800 families are being supported through parent support advisors in Children's Centres, nearly 250 young people have individual care through Targeted Youth Support and a further 630 children are helped through multi-agency 'Team Around the Child' interventions.
- The Children and Families Bill, due for implementation in September 2014, will bring significant changes for children and young people (age 0-25 years) with SEN and for their families. The key changes should ensure improved working between education, health and social care services, both strategically and operationally; give parents and young people greater influence and control, and allow more say in the help they receive over their lives; improve transition to adulthood, and enable personal budgets and choice in some of the help provided.
- In 2011 the Department for Education (DfE) confirmed that it would be introducing a National Funding Formula (NFF), to distribute the Dedicated Schools Grant. This was part of the Department's reform of the school funding system, to make it "fairer, more consistent and transparent and so funding intended for education reaches the schools and the pupils that need it most". The Committee voiced its concerns that the changes could be detrimental to many schools within North Yorkshire. We hope that by working closely with the Schools Forum and feeding into the Department for Education review, that the concerns of the Authority will be heeded.
- It is our intention as a Committee to take a holistic approach and our work programme also includes reports from the Director of Public Health for North Yorkshire. This includes not only an annual report but also looking ahead we will receive reports on the Healthy Child Programme, Smoking Cessation Services, Alcohol Strategy and the Mental Health Strategy.

- Keeping healthy also means encouraging children and young people to be involved in sport. In these austere times I was delighted to learn that all primary school children in North Yorkshire will receive funding of over £5.5 million over the next 2 years. First of all this means that extra sport and physical education could in the long run help to reduce obesity in young people; secondly if this country is to achieve the highest rewards not only at national, but also at international levels such as the Olympic Games and World Sports, then the training has to begin with the youngest.
- The programme for Developing Stronger Families Programme (this title replacing the former negative one of 'Troubled Families'). Is a good news story, not only for the County Council but more importantly for those families that have been involved in it. This programme builds on the strengths of the individual family, helps to ensure that the appropriate support is in place and so, hopefully, works with them for a better future
- Looking to the future we note the proposals from the North Yorkshire Commission for School Improvement which include the development of a small number of school-led commissioning groups across the County. These are seen as a positive way forward. The Commission sees working together and constructive challenge to secure access to good and indeed outstanding education Now where have I heard that before?



County Councillor Elizabeth Shields
Chairman Young People O&SC

Looking Ahead

This report has highlighted some of the work undertaken by each of the Committees over the last year. The table below gives examples of areas of work the Committees have planned for the future:

O&S Committee	Area of work
Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Abuse of Vulnerable Adults • (Integrated) Support for People with Long term Conditions • Prevention Strategy • The Care Bill – content and implications
Corporate & Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2020 North Yorkshire • Video Conferencing • Property Disposal • Procurement
Scrutiny of Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s and Maternity Services at the Friarage Hospital, Northallerton • Whitby - “Fit 4 the Future” • Hambleton and Richmondshire - "Fit 4 the Future" • Scarborough & Ryedale Integrated Urgent Care Model - Formal consultation • York Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust: Update on Developments
Transport, Economy & Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to the grass-cutting service • Updates from Highways Agency and Ringway (Highways Maintenance Contract) • The use and management of Unsurfaced, Unclassified Roads (UUR) • Local bus services review
Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online safety of children and young people • Children and sexual exploitation • Child poverty • Public Health reports on alcohol strategy, mental health strategy & the Healthy Child Programme

If you would like to know more about how Overview and Scrutiny works in North Yorkshire County Council a handy guide is published on our website at www.northyorks.gov.uk or contact the Scrutiny Team Leader Bryon Hunter bryon.hunter@northyorks.gov.uk, Tel. 01609 532898

I hope you have found this Overview and Scrutiny Annual report both useful and interesting.

Thank you.

County Councillor Liz Casling