

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL****12 NOVEMBER 2014****CARE AND INDEPENDENCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE****CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT**Care and Support Where I Live Strategy

1. When we reviewed the consultation document: "2020 North Yorkshire Care and Support Where I Live," we were wholehearted in our support for a strategy which, as the foreword says, represents a significant part of the Council's vision to meet people's needs now and in the future. We welcomed the notion of planning ahead to respond to the increasing number of people who need care and support. It is also indeed vital that Extra Care homes are at the heart of the community in targeted locations so that people know they can receive the help, support and advice they need. Equally important is that we continue to manage demand to cope with the implications of demographic change.
2. We look forward to the results of the consultation process and emerging Directorate thinking being available for our January meeting, prior to a decision being taken by the Executive.

Local Account 2013-14

3. Given that 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 years, it was important that the Committee had an opportunity to review, pass comment and make suggestions for any amendments, before it is published. We found the document well written and accessible. It passed what for us is perhaps the pivotal test: it is not self-congratulatory, evidenced in part by the included case studies which describe how the Directorate has learned from experience, and then improved practice.
4. The Local Account is seen as a replacement from the previous - some would say onerous - inspection and performance regime. The present emphasis is very much on producing something accessible and "public friendly". None of us would disagree with that aim. But because it is not a statutory requirement, with no definitive rules about what should be reported and in what level of detail, it is difficult to gauge the extent of what its scope should be. What is apparent, however, is that CQC would take a dim view were we to stop publishing a Local Account on an annual basis. For all the reasons outlined above, the North

Yorkshire version is a high quality document, so it came as no surprise to us that the CQC has held up the North Yorkshire Local Account as an example of best practice.

5. Each year we look at how the Account is published, where it is “on deposit”, to whom it is sent - how people can get to see it and comment if they wish. This year, consideration is being given to publish this year’s Local Account in electronic format only. The cost benefits might speak for themselves, but Members wanted reassurances about the document’s continued accessibility. When it was explained that hard copies would still be available for those that want and/or need it, and it is intended to continue to spread the word through existing networks, we were comfortable with this streamlined approach.

#### 2013 Annual Report of the Director of Public Health for North Yorkshire

6. The Director of Public Health’s second Annual Report reaffirmed the view I know many of us hold: public health is back where it belongs, within the sphere of local authority responsibility. As a Committee, we are increasingly taking an interest in how public health activity and intervention in specific public health initiatives. Beyond the obvious benefits to the population, this work also complements our social care priorities, especially prevention, which could prove critical in the continuing financial challenges ahead.
7. We congratulated Dr Sargeant on both the clarity of his report and for the inclusion of recommendations that are targeted, realistic and achievable.

#### Safeguarding Annual Report

8. Safeguarding is a range of activity aimed at upholding an adult’s fundamental right to be safe, at the same time as respecting peoples’ rights to make choices. Raising the profile of safeguarding is as important as it ever has been; we all share a responsibility for safeguarding, but scrutiny Members must also ensure that proper arrangements are in place with partners to ensure safeguarding of our communities is effective. The evidence in the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Board’s report for 2013/14 convinced us (as previous years’ reports have done) that partners demonstrate strong, strategic commitment to this agenda.
9. 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. I’m pleased that the vitally important work Trading Standards do to

protect people from this growing form of abuse - which we became aware of earlier this year - will feature in the Members Seminar on the 5th November 2014. Our work on financial abuse has a wider safeguarding focus in that it has looked at the range of strategic and community based activity to protect vulnerable adults.

#### North Yorkshire Local Assistance Fund (NYLAF)

10. When NYLAF was first implemented, the Committee recognised just how much the scheme was designed to assist and help people, especially vulnerable adults, to remain in their communities and help families under exceptional pressure to stay together. Awards from the fund are made in kind, in the form of goods or services. Items requested must be essential and critical to the needs of the applicant or those of their family. Available items include essential items of household furniture and equipment, beds and bedding, food vouchers, clothing vouchers, utility top-up vouchers, utility reconnection charges and essential home repairs.
11. At our recent meeting we reviewed progress, specifically how NYLAF has adapted to ensure that expenditure is used wisely, but does not exceed its existing budget. We recognised the challenges for 2015/16 onwards and the stakeholder consultation undertaken. As part of this consultation we were presented with a number of options regarding funding for the future. Because of the support NYLAF gives to some of our most vulnerable adults we strongly recommend that the NYLAF should continue as currently. This means NYLAF continuing to provide awards up to the amount that has been provided to date by central Government. In reaching this decision, we were particularly mindful that even relatively small sums, when made available to struggling families, can have a significant, often life-changing impact. That said, in coming to this recommendation, we did acknowledge the financial implications this has for the County Council now that the Government has announced that funding to support NYLAF will be incorporated into mainstream grant funding.

#### Members Involvement in Inspection Matters

12. The importance of the elected Member role in promoting stronger communities was uppermost in our minds when we looked at how, as community leaders, Members could be better informed about the arrangements for regulation and inspection of care establishments. Nevertheless, we recognised the sensitivities about entering what is effectively someone else's home. We also took into account the difficulties in managing these arrangements so that Members are in a position to contribute positively.

13. The Directorate is looking to redesign its quality assurance process and framework, with links to the requirements of the Care Act and provision of information to the public. This provided us with an opportunity to engage Members in the inspection role HAS carries out as a commissioner of adult social care. Members will then have the opportunity to feed in comments from constituents about issues they are experiencing personally, or in relation to family members. In addition, the HAS team will share information about the care home and domiciliary care market with Members.
  
14. We can see this approach working in principle, but further fine tuning on detail is needed before any proposals are finalised and brought to a Committee meeting.

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

**County Hall,**  
**NORTHALLERTON**

**October 2014**