

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

11 November 2015

SCRUTINY OF HEALTH COMMITTEE – STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The main areas of involvement of the Scrutiny of Health Committee are summarised below.

Developments at the Lambert Hospital, Thirsk

On 4 September 2015 the South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust announced that the 14-bed ward at Lambert Memorial Hospital in Thirsk would temporarily close on Friday 21 September to address patient safety concerns brought about by staffing pressures.

The ward, which provided general rehabilitation, assessment of patients' present and future care needs, diagnostics, drug initiation and administration, pain control and palliative care, was open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

We heard that six additional beds would be opened on the Rutson Ward at the Friarage Hospital.

Whilst Members understood the difficulties that NHS nationally and locally is facing filling vacancies we did feel the Trust could have acted sooner to resolve the staffing shortages at the Lambert Hospital. This could have included redeploying staff from other parts of the Trust. We were also surprised at the suddenness of the decision and with no consultation.

While the situation will be reviewed in early 2016 we are concerned as to how people who would have been admitted to hospital will receive the necessary care particularly as we are reaching the winter period.

We requested a further report at our meeting on 6 November 2015 on what is being done across health and social care to mitigate the loss of the beds. I will report verbally on the outcome of those discussions.

Developments in the Provision of Mental Health Services

On 11 May 2015 the Care Quality Commission (CQC) published the results of its inspection of the Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys (TEWV) NHS Foundation Trust. The overall rating for the Trust was "Good" although the CQC raised certain concerns around safety and at the meeting in September we heard how the Trust is addressing these concerns. We were particularly impressed how the Trust has recently set up Section 136 Suites for people with mental health problems who need to be taken to a place of safety rather than being taken to a police station. Suites are now operating in Harrogate, Northallerton and Scarborough.

Members will be aware that Bootham Hospital in York was closed by the CQC at the end of September and while this mainly concerns residents of the City of York Council it does impact on North Yorkshire residents particularly those in the Selby district. On 1 October 2015 the contract for mental health in the York and Selby area was taken over by the Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust who are now in discussions with the CQC to ensure appropriate action is taken both in the short and long term.

GP Commissioning of Primary Care

I have recently met with all of the Clinical Commissioning Groups to explore how they are dealing with potential conflicts of interest now they are more involved in the commissioning of primary care.

GPs who are members of the CCG will, in effect, be commissioning work from themselves at a local level. In addition most individual GPs are now part of federations which will facilitate them being part of bids for contracts covering larger geographical areas.

I am reassured that the CCGs have introduced appropriate measures in accordance with guidance from NHS England to guard against conflicts of interest although there are a one or two matters that I am following up with a view to understanding more fully how these problems are being managed effectively.

Committee Meeting on 6 November 2015

At this meeting we will also receive a report from the South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust on its response to the CQC Inspection published in June 2015 which rated the Trust as "Requires Improvement".

We will also receive a report from the Yorkshire Ambulance Service on how it is responding to the CQC Inspection which also rated this service as "Requires Improvement". Discussions will also cover concerns raised by local residents regarding ambulance response times in Craven.

I will report verbally to County Council on the outcome of these discussions.

The York Teaching Hospitals FT was also rated as "Requiring Improvement" in its CQC Inspection published on 8 October 2015. We are liaising with the Trust to agree the best time for them to report to the Committee on how they are addressing the issues raised.

Fracking

We will be holding a joint meeting with the Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Friday 22 January 2016 to look at this matter in detail. The objective of the meeting will be to agree policy advice to the Executive with a view to informing publication of the North Yorkshire Minerals and Waste Plan where it deals with issues which relate to Fracking.

In preparation for that meeting we have already met with an independent Public Health expert with a view to informing the lines of enquiry we might pursue in January.

County Councillor Jim Clark
Chairman: North Yorkshire County Council Scrutiny of Health Committee

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