

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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STATEMENT FROM PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH, STRONGER COMMUNITIES, LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND THE ROLE OF AREA COMMITTEES

COUNTY COUNCILLOR DAVID CHANCE

Public Health Grant

The recent Spending Review has resulted in further reductions in the Public Health Grant to local authorities. In addition to the in-year £200 million cut announced last summer, there will be a further cash reduction of 9.6% which will be phased in through to 2020.

As a Council we set out an ambitious programme of investment in services and initiatives that are focused on prevention and aimed at addressing the distinctive public health issues in our county. Given that North Yorkshire's public health team has mainly been recruited from new and all services inherited from the PCT have had to be re-commissioned, we have accumulated a reserve in the first two years. This reserve will be used to buffer the impact of the reduction to the grant. However, we will need to review the scale and ambition of our plans to ensure that we continue to achieve excellent public health outcomes within the now reduced budget available to us.

Public health campaigns

A key part of our approach is to actively engage our residents in taking care of their health. The Public Health and Communications Teams have worked closely in a number of local and national public health campaigns.

We promoted HIV testing last November as part of the National HIV testing week to raise awareness of late diagnosis of HIV which is an issue across the UK. Reducing the rate of late HIV diagnosis in North Yorkshire is one of the key outcomes that NYCC has identified. Our approach to commissioning sexual health services places emphasis on HIV prevention and promotes testing. The YorSexualHealth service works to raise awareness about HIV testing and runs high profile campaigns during national HIV testing week each year. In addition, as part of the commissioned service we have invested in outreach to high risk groups and in community point of care testing to make access to HIV testing easier. A planned development within the YorSexualHealth service to be introduced in the near future is 'virtual clinics'. These will provide telephone, online and postal services so that people don't have to attend a clinic. Virtual services will include routine STI/HIV testing (for people without symptoms), some STI treatments, certain types of contraception and free condoms.

In December we emphasised winter health with the “Keep well, keep warm, keep safe” campaign and as the year began we invited our residents to sign up to Dry January.

We are now supporting a new campaign designed to get the county’s families thinking about the amount of sugar they consume. Public Health England has launched a new easy to use Sugar Smart app to help parents to see how much sugar there is in everyday food and drink. The free app works by scanning the barcode of products and revealing the total amount of sugar it contains in cubes and grams. We’re encouraging parents across the county to download the new Sugar Smart app and take control of the amount of sugar their family consumes, to protect them from the health risks of having too much sugar.

Throughout February and into March we will support campaigns aimed at cancer prevention and early detection. The Quit16 (16 cancers) campaign is the region’s first mass media anti-tobacco campaign and runs over the month of February. It has been funded jointly by local authority public health teams and is supported by Cancer Research UK. The campaign highlights the risks of developing one of 16 cancers caused by smoking and that quitting is the one clear way to reduce risk.

The Be Clear on Cancer brand has been used to promote awareness and early diagnosis of bladder and kidney cancer. Public Health England announced that they will be running the next ‘blood in pee’ campaign from 15 February to 31 March 2016. The campaign’s key message will be ‘If you notice blood in your pee, even if it’s ‘just the once’, tell your doctor.’ Finding cancer early makes it more treatable.

Focus on Scarborough

The Council is mandated to work to improve the health of our population and to reduce variation in health outcomes. We know that a greater proportion of mothers in Scarborough smoke during pregnancy compared to the rest of the county. Latest figures show that around 1 in 5 women who give birth at Scarborough Hospital smoke, which can cause serious complications to the health of their baby. The Scarborough and Ryedale CCG is working with the midwifery team at Scarborough Hospital and the new NYCC commissioned stop smoking service (Smokefreelife North Yorkshire) to encourage more pregnant women to kick the habit. This will be supported through a new initiative known as Baby Clear, which offers training to midwives to support them in offering frank, factual and non-judgemental advice to women about the risks of smoking in pregnancy.

In January we launched an outreach service offering free drop-in NHS Health Checks for the over 40s at mobile clinics in and around Scarborough as well as farming communities across the county. Health checks can save lives by picking up on warning signs of heart disease, stroke and diabetes. We want to make sure everyone can take up the offer of a free NHS health check easily and conveniently. Our new team of healthy lifestyle advisors will be coming out to rural areas as well as offering checks in and around Scarborough. They will also be visiting workplaces and local clinics, as well as agricultural shows and farmers’ markets throughout the year.

Working with the local NHS

The Chief Executive of the NHS has called for a radical upgrade in prevention and public health in the Five Year Forward View for NHS. The Public Health Team are working with our local clinical commissioning teams in developing prevention plans to address the health and wellbeing gap in their area. We have worked with our NHS partners on a number of key strategies including Mental Health, Winter Health, and Alcohol and Tobacco Control which form a strong foundation for prevention and public health action in the NHS.

Great Heck fire

Several officers from across the Council, including our Public Health Team alongside colleagues in Public Health England, were part of a multi-agency response to a fire that developed at a waste site in Great Heck, Selby. The public health role in these incidents is to assess, monitor and manage risks to public health. Incidents like this fire illustrate the importance of our health protection role as a Council to be assured that plans are in place to protect residents from threats to their health.

Winter Health Strategy

The North Yorkshire's Winter Health Strategy launch event will take place on Thursday 17 March 2016 at the Pavilions of Harrogate, 9am – 2pm. It will form the second annual North Yorkshire Seasonal Winter Health Wider Partnership Conference, building on the progress and actions developed in the first event held in June 2015. There will be opportunities for delegates to visit the open 'marketplace' stalls where partners are invited to showcase their work. The event will give partners the opportunity to contribute to the implementation of the strategy, share best practice and build partnerships and learn about excellent work that partners are carrying out in other parts of the county.

Stronger Communities

A key focus for the Stronger Communities programme over the winter has been supporting the formation of management groups for the proposed community libraries and supporting them with governance, options appraisals, trustee recruitment and the preparation of their formal Expressions of Interest, to date 10 have been submitted. The next significant milestones will be supporting groups to secure charitable status and the preparation and submission of business plans.

Work is nearing completion on the development of a policy and procedure for the authority to consider the transfer of property to the community. Funded and supported by Locality under the national Community Ownership and Management of Assets (COMA) programme, a policy and procedure has been adopted and three communities supported with pre-feasibility grants (Norton on Derwent, Sherburn in Elmet and Tadcaster). The procedure will be tested and refined over the coming weeks with groups interested in Sharow View, Ripon.

Further links are being forged between Stronger Communities and wider Children & Young People's Services including support for community led Early Years provision and support for inclusion projects including peer support for families of children with disabilities. Building on the success of work in Knaresborough and Easingwold, the Stronger Communities team are establishing partnership groups in the main market towns to coordinate youth provision initially and early years in the longer term.

The programme continues to support grass roots community projects across the county. To date 82 applications have been received from groups delivering projects across all four of the programme's priorities. A total of 75 projects have been approved; the total value of grants awarded is £540k. An analysis of projects supported under the programme to date shows between 1000 and 1500 new volunteering opportunities have been created across the county delivering a range of new activities and services such as Good Neighbours, digital buddies, befriending services, youth clubs, parent and toddler sessions, community cafés and hubs, and dementia and mental health training. Following the success of the world café event in Eastfield in the autumn, a similar event is being held in Catterick this month centred on the work of The Beacon. Work to build capacity with community transport providers in Craven and Ryedale is completed and discussions are on-going with boards of trustees around options for their future development.

In addition to the on-going support grass roots community projects, strategic projects being delivered include commissioning North Yorkshire and York Forum to carry out some gap analysis and profiling research across the county in order to better understand the specific challenges of the different areas; developing a shared outcome framework and impact evaluation tools across Public Health, Stronger Communities and Targeted Prevention; developing a strategic marketing and branding improvement brief for community transport providers - this will include a targeted campaign to recruit volunteer drivers; an innovative "Digital Neighbours" scheme in Scarborough – in partnership with Adult Learning Service and Scarborough Borough Council's Digital Inclusion Partnership; volunteer recruitment events and activities and preparing case study evidence and an evaluation of some early outcomes of stronger communities investment.