

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**15 February 2017****SCRUTINY OF HEALTH COMMITTEE – STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN**

The main topics arising since my last statement are:

Sustainability and Transformation Plans

The Scrutiny of Health Committee continues to scrutinise the development of the three Sustainability and Transformation Plans that cover North Yorkshire.

At the November 2016 committee meeting, members resolved to call upon the lead officers for the STPs to attend a Mid Cycle Briefing and provide answers to a number of questions about the: scope of the STPs; level of engagement with local authorities and other key partners; governance and decision making processes; projected 'do nothing deficits to 2021'; and plans to divert funding from acute trusts to community services. Some reassurances were given, principally about the engagement of a broader range of non-NHS services and organisations but concerns remained about the governance arrangements and how realistic and robust the financial plans were.

We followed up these lines of enquiry at the January 2017 committee meeting and members re-iterated their concerns about the risk posed to local health and social care, community-based funding and services in the county. Members will be aware that the STP process may lead to NHS funding being drawn away from the county to large urban areas like Middlesbrough, Leeds and Bradford, and Hull. This then risks downgrading of services at places like the Darlington Memorial Hospital and Ripon Community Hospital.

On behalf of the committee, I continue to work with the Chair of the North Yorkshire Health and Wellbeing Board, the Director of Health and Adult Services and the Chief Executive to ensure that there is a co-ordinated approach to the oversight of and engagement with STPs.

I remain concerned that the STP process is NHS dominated, rushed in its development and unrealistic in its financial assumptions and planning. Whilst the STP process is supported in principle and offers a very real opportunity to make the NHS fit for the future, it runs the risk of being another heavy-handed, top-down reorganisation of health that will not deliver what has been promised.

Joint Scrutiny of Health

Members will be aware that I and two other county councillors, Cllrs Blackie and Dickinson, are involved in joint health scrutiny in the north of the county. A Joint Health Scrutiny Committee has been in place for the last 6 months, looking at the development of the 'Better Health Programme' for the Tees Valley and the Hambleton Richmondshire and Whitby CCG area. A similar committee is now in place for West Yorkshire, covering the 'Healthy Futures Programme'.

Whilst both of these committees have a role to play in scrutinising the development of two of the three STPs that cover the county, I am concerned that their remit only includes an element of the STP process, typically major service changes at acute trusts, and not the totality of what is being proposed. I am also concerned that the key role that North Yorkshire has to play is often overlooked and that the county has, in effect, been dismembered for the purposes of the STP planning process.

We will continue to engage in the joint scrutiny process and argue the case for North Yorkshire.

Changes to mental health services across the county

Proposals for changes in the way that mental health services are delivered in the county have been a recurrent theme at the Scrutiny of Health Committee.

In November, we received a report from the Tees Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust providing an update on mental health services in York/Selby area, including the proposed public consultation on the development for a new mental health hospital for the Vale of York.

In January, Hambleton Richmondshire and Whitby CCG and Tees Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust updated members on the plans to develop mental health services in the HRW CCG area, including: rationale; principles; national guidelines; and the programme for engagement and consultation.

We welcome the drive by Tees Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust and others to improve services and to start the process of closing the gap after years of under-investment in mental health provision in the county. There is a concern, however, that the services on offer in North Yorkshire continue to lag behind those in neighbouring authorities, particularly County Durham and the Tees Valley.

I am also concerned that the approach currently taken appears to be piecemeal, focussing on services and areas of the county one at a time. Whilst such an approach ensures a strong focus upon the development of individual services according to local needs, it does not take a system wide view of what the needs are across the county as a whole. As such, the committee will continue to seek reassurance that a comprehensive approach to mental health services is considered.

End of Life Care – outcome of extended scrutiny

The Scrutiny of Health Committee has been looking into end of life care services and interventions since July 2016, as part of a piece of extended scrutiny. The work has involved desk-top research, expert witnesses giving evidence at committee meetings, visits to hospices in the county and a number of telephone interviews with service commissioners and providers.

The draft report was presented to the Scrutiny of Health Committee at their meeting on 27 January 2017 for review and comment. Whilst the report is not yet complete and there remain lines of enquiry to be undertaken, there are a number of recommendations that have been drafted, as follows:

- That a multi-agency forum is established for commissioners and providers of end of life care in the county
- That a local financial analysis of community-based end of life care and bereavement services be undertaken
- That a multi-agency programme of training in end of life care and care for the dying be developed and implemented
- That existing joint work between the NHS and the County Council on health and social care workforce planning, takes into account the need for skilled, specialist staff to co-ordinate end of life care and palliative care
- That a way of enabling the sharing and updating of end of life care plans and patient notes electronically is developed for all health and social care agencies and organisations in the county
- That a local analysis of 'the patient of the future' is undertaken that looks at the changing disease profile of people in their last 12 months of life and what this means for the development and delivery of end of life care
- That a system-wide analysis is undertaken of the current provision of out of hours, specialist end of life care and palliative care, including access to palliative care medication
- That agencies and organisations work together to promote a culture of open and honest discussions about death and planning the last 12 months of someone's life.

During February, the draft report will be reviewed by stakeholders and the outstanding lines of enquiry pursued. Then, the final version of the report will be taken to the committee Mid Cycle Briefing on 3 March 2017 for sign off, ahead of being presented to the North Yorkshire Health and Wellbeing Board on 17 March 2017.

Funding for community pharmacies - Notice of Motion from 9 November 2016

At the meeting of the County Council in November 2016, a Notice of Motion was passed regarding concerns about the impact of reductions in central government funding to community pharmacies. Specifically, that the services on offer would be reduced and that some community pharmacies may be forced to close. The matter was referred to the Scrutiny of Health Committee.

At the committee Mid Cycle Briefing on 16 December 2016, we heard a presentation by Jack Davies, Chief Executive Officer of Community Pharmacy North Yorkshire (Local Pharmaceutical Committee). In the short term, it is not anticipated that there will be any closures or mergers of community pharmacies. Concerns have been raised, however, that some community pharmacies will have to tailor the services that they offer, reducing opening hours, ending free services and reducing stock held on the premises.

In response, Members determined to maintain a watching brief on impact of the funding cuts, receiving 6 monthly updates at committee. Also, to undertake a piece of work with NYCC Public Health and others to better understand the potential impact in the longer term.

Members will be aware that community pharmacies are the first point of contact for people with non-emergency health concerns, relieving pressure upon GPs and A&E and so saving the NHS money. I am concerned that, in the longer term, the erosion of services provided by community pharmacies will mean that the savings made in the community pharmacy contract will be far outweighed by the increased costs picked up by GPs and A&E.

The Lambert at Thirsk – transfer of services and long term plans for site

Members will be aware that the Lambert Memorial Hospital in Thirsk has been closed since December 2016. This final closure follows a period of 15 months, during which the hospital was temporarily closed due to workforce shortages.

The services that were provided at the Lambert are now being provided across a number of different sites in the area, following a period of engagement, consultation and service re-design that was led by the Hambleton Richmondshire and Whitby CCG. We will continue to monitor these services to ensure that people are accessing the healthcare they need at or above the level they did when the Lambert was open.

We will also scrutinise any proposals for the development of the Lambert building, lobbying for the site to be used as a community hub for health and social care services in Thirsk and the surrounding area.

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

February 2017