

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**18 July 2018**

**STATEMENT OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH, PREVENTION & SUPPORTED HOUSING  
PORTFOLIO HOLDER COUNTY COUNCILLOR CAROLINE DICKINSON**

**Public Mental Health**

I attended a mental health summit at the end of May which was hosted by the Health and Wellbeing Board. I do not need to remind colleagues of the challenges in providing access to high quality mental health services consistently across the county. A key theme of the summit was ensuring that we were moving in the right direction in improving services. However, we must also continue to address the causes and consequences of mental ill health in the population.

The World Health Organisation observes that people with severe mental illness have their lives shortened by 10 to 25 years compared with the general population. Although suicide is a significant cause of death the vast majority of people with mental illness die early from “physical medical conditions”. It is estimated that 95% die from potentially preventable causes including heart disease, strokes, respiratory illness, diabetes and hypertension.

The Council has a relatively small role for delivering mental health services – most of these are commissioned by the NHS. However, we have invested substantially from the public health grant in creating the Stronger Communities Programme and the Living Well team which together form the core of our approach to public mental health. In addition we have worked to raise awareness of mental health and wellbeing through training and targeted campaigns as well as initiatives to reduce stigma.

In light of the fact that people with mental health problems tend to have poorer physical health, we are working to ensure that our public health services provide them with the support needed to lead healthier lives. For example, some 78% of people who quit smoking through our smoking cessation services come from priority risk groups including mental health service users.

We have a suicide prevention strategy and the public health team has been working with the Police and other partners most recently in a joint approach on Project Kraken, a counter terrorism initiative to produce signs along the coast providing information for the Samaritans and border force patrols to raise awareness of vulnerability and suspicious activity. This work was featured in an ITV news report.

As part of the wider suicide prevention work we commissioned a targeted campaign aimed at men aged 30-49 years living in Malton, Selby and Scarborough Town areas. The campaign engaged with men from the target group to develop the approach and materials to promote positive mental health. The project was shortlisted for a Public Sector Communications Award.

## **Public Health and Economic Growth**

Two years ago our Director of Public Health focused on the link between good work and health in his award winning Annual Public Health Report. We know the issues for young people in our rural county in terms of transport to access employment and training opportunities. The availability of affordable housing is also a challenge for this group. Recent national data has identified that the peak age for loneliness and social isolation is 16 to 25 years. Our public health team are working with colleagues across the Council and districts to ensure our growth plan helps us to deliver both economic and wellbeing benefits to those areas and groups in greatest need. The team has also worked with spatial planners and the Directors of Development across the area to help shape a York, North Yorkshire, East Riding and Hull Spatial Framework vision for growth.

These strategic plans and frameworks are vital to ensure future economic growth and housing responds to the needs of our rural county and includes everyone in the benefits. However, it will take time to realise these benefits.

I was pleased to make a contribution through my locality budget to a project in my local area that does make a difference to young people who have no access to transport to get to work or training. Wheels 2 Work is a not-for profit moped loan scheme which helps people to get to work, apprenticeships, or training, where no other form of transport is available. Eligible candidates receive a moped after they have completed the compulsory basic training. Wheels 2 Work is based in Northallerton and has been running since 2001. It has helped more than a thousand people to access employment and training opportunities which would not have been possible without their own transport.

## **Dementia Congress**

I was privileged to chair the Dementia Congress at the new rugby club in Scalby on 23<sup>rd</sup> May. The event was a review of progress with the Health and Wellbeing Dementia Strategy 'Bring Me sunshine'. It was an opportunity to mark Dementia Week together and to honour the many people in North Yorkshire who try to live well with dementia. The event was planned in partnership with our voluntary sector and health colleagues and was attended by almost as many people with a dementia diagnosis and their carers as by professionals. The sun may not have been shining outside that day but the energy and interest in the room on 23<sup>rd</sup> May was astonishing. It was an inspiring event but we can never underestimate the toll that dementia takes on lives. If ever we need a reminder of why the support we commission for people living with the effects of dementia is so important then talking to those who attended about the challenges they face and the difference the right help can make is all that is required. One area often overlooked, but given the focus it needs at this year's congress, was the growing issue of early onset dementia - people diagnosed before they are 65. Our two support services have been developing the support available to this younger group of people and although there is more to do it was heartening to hear how the activities and networks this support offers can make a real difference.

### **Ground breaking for new Extra Care scheme at Scalby Road Scarborough**

On the same day I was able travel a few hundred yards down the road to attend the Groundbreaking event to mark the start on site of the new Extra Care Scheme. On the site of the old Rugby Club on Scalby Road, the development has been a long time in the planning. The scheme is now progressing after government confirmed last October that the housing costs for Extra Care would not be included in the Local Housing Allowance benefit cap.

The development sees a collaboration between Home Group, Ashley House, North Yorkshire County Council and Scarborough Borough Council to provide 63 apartments for over 55s and those with extra care needs. The scheme will also see a full range of on-site communal facilities spring to life including a restaurant and café, guest suites, hair salon, spa room, office facilities and scooter charging facilities.

**CAROLINE DICKINSON**