

North Yorkshire County Council**North Yorkshire Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board****Wednesday 28 March 2012****Delivering Health Care in a Rural County****Report of the Corporate Director – Health and Adult Services****1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This report invites the Health and Wellbeing Board to consider how they would wish to address this key issue in future meetings.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 North Yorkshire is England's largest County covering more than 3200 square miles. An issue that is likely to be a recurring theme for the Health and Wellbeing Board is the challenge of providing good quality, accessible and sustainable health services in a largely rural, sparsely populated county.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 Some of the factors that are raised include the evolution in health service delivery from generalist to specialist and sub specialism; an evidence base that supports the concentration of some services to improve health outcomes (e.g. stroke centres, major trauma centres, cancer centres); recruitment and retention issues; and the impact of the European Working Time Directive.
- 3.2 The consequence of these and other factors is that people living in rural communities are often having to travel significant distances to access health services.
- 3.3 The Health and Wellbeing Board may wish to consider these issues as the Health and Wellbeing Strategy is developed. Is this an inevitable trend? Are there alternatives that can support local access? What is the experience and evidence from other remote and rural areas?
- 3.4 We have made contact with a number of individuals and centres and one option is to convene a workshop for the Health Wellbeing Board to provide an opportunity to explore and understand these issues in a deeper way than possible through a short report on an agenda in a formal Board meeting.

- 3.5 Those contacted include the Chair of the Scottish Government's Commission on Delivering for Remote and Rural Healthcare. Dr Roger Gibbins who led this work was the Chief Executive of NHS Highland from 2000 – 2010. We also have more local experience to draw on with a centre that is a European leader in the use of medical and communications technology (Airedale Hospital's Digital Healthcare Centre). The Health Economics Resource Centre at the University of York has also been contacted,

4.0 Recommendation

- 4.1 The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to consider whether holding a workshop on these issues would be useful to consider one of the major strategic challenges facing North Yorkshire.

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