

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

20 July 2022

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN OF THE SCRUTINY OF HEALTH COMMITTEE

The Scrutiny of Health Committee has a responsibility to review any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of health services within the County, including Ambulance Trusts and the policies of the Strategic Health Authority. A key part of that responsibility is requiring NHS bodies to consult health scrutiny on proposals for substantial developments or variations to local health service provision. The Committee contributes to annual health checks by providing commentaries to the Health Care Commission on the performance of NHS Trusts serving North Yorkshire and on the experiences that the Committee has had with those Trusts.

The committee last met on 17 June 2022, in person, in the Council Chamber at County Hall. At that meeting, committee members received presentations on: the role of scrutiny in North Yorkshire and the Committees that make up the scrutiny function: how the Scrutiny of Health Committee contributes and works with other Committees and partners; the work programme and areas the Committee feel are priorities for the next 18-24 months; the NHS response to, and recovery from, the pandemic locally; and data on the vaccination programme, infection rates and the number of people hospitalised with Covid-19.

Overview and Scrutiny and Scrutiny of Health Committee

Following the election on 5th May 2022 the Scrutiny of Health Committee comprises of a number of new Members and new Chair, this was therefore an ideal opportunity to provide the Committee Members with a summary of how overview and scrutiny is undertaken at the Council and the role Members have within that. The responsibilities and powers of the Committee were also identified.

Key points to note were, this is a new Committee in terms of membership and encourages Member and Officer participation; the Committee acts as a check and balance, in order to explore and challenge; joint working with external partners works well and is encouraged; work programme and mid cycle briefings are invaluable in maintaining focus on the areas to prioritise.

Prevalence data on the pandemic and vaccination rates

The Committee has followed the data presented on the pandemic with great interest over the past two years. At the meeting the Committee were given an update on the governments living with Covid plan which includes moving towards individual responsibility on key measures including isolation, testing and wearing face coverings, and the ending of routine contact tracing and legal requirements to isolate. The Committee was pleased to note that vaccination rates confirm the vaccination uptake (aged 12+) in North Yorkshire is 89.5% for the 1st dose, 86.2% for the 2nd dose and 73.7% for the third. This compares with England as a whole at 79.7%. 75.7% and 59.6% respectively. Additionally a 4th booster for specific groups of people is now being administered.

Committee Workplan

The Committee discussed at length the challenges facing healthcare across the County generally and in particular the areas the Committee felt would be a priority in terms of Scrutiny over the next 18-24 months. Particular areas that were suggested for inclusion in this were; nutrition and diet and how this effects health and wellbeing; reviewing the quality of meals in schools and prison's; the Government's handling of the pandemic; the crucial relationships with the Integrated Care Board and Integrated Care System; the pressures on workforces; autism and the quality and quantity of service provided, and the outdated autism strategy; access to dentistry across the area; access to GP surgeries and appointments; informing the public about changes to the way the NHS now operates GP services; additional pressures created on accident and emergency departments.

Whilst all of the areas discussed are important the Committee particular felt that autism across the County was the most pressing and with the full support of the Committee we agreed that a deep dive into autism be set up to start as soon as possible as a separate task group outside the Committee.

Committee Meeting on 9 September 2022

The next meeting of the committee will be at 10am on 9 September 2022. At this time, the items for consideration at that meeting are as follows: NHS update on North Yorkshire Place, the progress and position following the formal establishment of the Integrated Care System on 1/7/22: development of the Integrated Care Systems and Partnerships that cover North Yorkshire: hyper acute stroke services for the North Yorkshire population: mental health enhanced community services: TEWV CQC inspections and action plans.

The Committee is keen to work collaboratively and will therefore continue to link in with the Council's Area Constituency Committees to ensure focus is maintained at a local level and also the Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee to work jointly around social care and integrated working.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW LEE
Chairman of the Scrutiny of Health Committee

30 June 2022