

North Yorkshire Council

Care and Independence and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 28th March, 2024 commencing at 10.00 am.

Councillor Karin Sedgwick in the Chair. plus Councillors Caroline Dickinson, Karl Arthur, Roberta Swiers, Nigel Knapton, Andy Brown, Robert Heseltine, Eric Broadbent, George Jabbour, Andy Paraskos, Philip Barrett, Peter Lacey and Steve Shaw-Wright (as substitute for Councillor Jack Proud).

Officers present: Christine Phillipson, Principal Democratic Services Officer, Louise Wallace, Director of Public Health, . Mike Rudd, Head of Housing Market Development Accommodation and Carly Walker, Public Health Manager, HAS, Jo Marriott, Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance Officer, and Hannah Heinemann, Head of Housing Delivery and Partnership, North Yorkshire Council.

Apologies: Councillors Heather Moorhouse and Jack Proud.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

28 Minutes of the Meeting held on 7th December 2023

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 7th December be taken as read and confirmed by the Chair as a correct record.

It was again noted that the update from the meeting held on 2nd March 2023 on climate change training was still outstanding. This will be followed up again and an update given as soon as possible.

29 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Heather Moorhouse and Councillor Jack Proud (with Councillor Steve Shaw-Wright as substitute).

30 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

31 Public Participation

No public questions or statements were received.

32 Annual Report of the Director of Public Health

Considered – Presentation of the Director of Public Health's Annual Report 2022-2023 from Louise Wallace, Director of Public Health, North Yorkshire Council.

This report is entitled “A Child's Life in North Yorkshire” and provides an opportunity to highlight key issues and opportunities and share recommendations for action.

The report covers

- Early years
- Primary
- Secondary
- Late adolescence and early adulthood

There then followed a discussion covering the following:

It was noted that dentistry remains an ongoing concern across the County. It was also noted that vaping was on the increase and becoming a large concern.

Obesity was a concern also and it was asked what we are doing to combat that.

There is an opportunity to communicate on some of these issues through the regular member seminars. Colleagues in HAS are already working across directorates in particular leisure and housing supporting healthy life expectancy. This ensures these areas of concern are being embedded in every directorate across the Council. Healthy ageing will be the subject of the next annual report.

It was remarked that advertising to young children aged 13-18 years was going unchecked. Understanding the facts and changing scenarios around what is being advertised is essential and Councillors being able to give a voice to these issues is so supportive.

It was noted that although there is a reported increase in SEN, the data and figures need to be provided in order to scrutinise effectively.

This was agreed.

There is an increase in obesity in children in specific areas of North Yorkshire.

Areas to support this are underway with schools signing up to participate and understand healthy food and education. Work is underway with academic partners.

In relation to school meals, it was requested that more information on this could be provided to inform opinion, i.e., the ingredients and the waste figures for example, is a healthier option actually being consumed or contributing to increasing waste ?. Detail on how the food is prepared and supported would be beneficial.

It was requested that benchmark figures be provided in order to allow useful scrutiny.

If any further details were required on any of the areas in the report, then please contact Louise, there is also always opportunity to cascade further data from the performance reports that go to Executive quarterly.

It was noted that vaping is also on the increase. Dentistry remains an issue and access to an NHS dentist's a problem.

Resolved – The Chair thanked Louise for the report and reminded members that any further detail on specific figures could be requested from Louise directly.

33 The Local Account

Considered – Report of the Director of Public Health, Louise Wallace.

Louise updated the Committee and reiterated that the purpose of this report was to introduce the draft Health and Adult Services Local Account.

The Local Account is an annual statement of HAS performance in delivering adult social care. The time period covered for this Local Account is 1st April 2022 - 31st March 2023.

This covered;

- Who we are and what we do
- What we did in 2022/23
- How did we do
- How much did we spend
- What are we doing in 2023/24

It was reiterated that this was a draft report and feedback on any missing areas would be welcomed to support the final version. This was a continuous journey for improvement not just preparation for a CQC report. This was a preparation tool in readiness for inspection, likened to holding a mirror to ourselves in order to improve.

There then followed a member discussion raising the following points;

- The situation with the recruitment and retention of care workers was raised and the difficulty in retaining staff along with the increase in care packages.
- This was a report of history and could we therefore look at 23/24 in the next 6 months in order to be more proactive.
- Could we look to change the terminology of the over 65 age group, with age as biological not chronological.
- Supporting people at home is failing and can we add to the work programme in order to maintain focus.

Resolved – The Chair thanked Louise for the report and asked the Committee to review and note the draft report.

34 Summary of the Annual Report of the Adults Safeguarding Board

Considered – The summary of the annual report of the safeguarding board.

Resolved – The committee noted the summary report.

35 Annual Report of the Older People's Champion

Considered – The annual report of the older peoples champion, Councillor Caroline Dickinson.

Councillor Dickinson briefed the committee on her annual report identifying some key areas reviewed and also priorities for the coming year.

Issues raised by members following this included;

- The low uptake of the shingles vaccine
- More feedback on pension credits would be beneficial
- Pro-actively identifying support going forward, i.e., retirement options
- Transport issues

Resolved – The Committee thanked Councillor Dickinson for the very interesting and informative report.

36 Dementia Care

Considered – An update from Mike Rudd, Head of Housing Market Development

Accommodation and Carly Walker, Public Health Manager, HAS.

This covered the following points;

- Dementia in North Yorkshire
- Diagnosing well in North Yorkshire
- Dementia Support & Advice Service Data
- Dementia Care in the Community
- Care Market Capacity
- Dementia Care in Residential and Nursing Settings
- Programme of Work to Upskill / Build Capacity
- Dementia Strategy
- Strategic working with the ICBs

There then followed a discussion around the following points;

It was asked why we are now diagnosing people early.

This was due to a number of factors including the fact that public awareness has hugely increased, people are not as scared to come forward and GP culture has improved.

It was noted that the refresh strategy would be added to the work plan to come back to Committee in the summer.

It was questioned if dementia awareness training for taxi drivers had been considered as this had been successful elsewhere.

This had not been considered at present but links with the community in general had been established.

There did remain a covid shadow that prevented people from coming forward.

A Dying Matters awareness week would be in May.

Waiting times for a diagnosis were raised as it was suggested this could be up to 2 years. This should be monitored carefully, as we need more data on this for information.

It was asked how dementia manifested itself.

This was generally by becoming more forgetful. If this was the case help and advice should be sought immediately.

Discussion arose around how will we cope with the subsequent increased cost in this area, how we could raise awareness and what support was available as well as identifying the practical impacts and also if regional variations exist.

Removing the stigma around dementia was key. Typical practical impacts were loss of dignity, issues with driving, insurance and the more general difficulty in accepting the situation and circumstances and subsequent support. Regional variations were evident, but it was important that the message is that we live with dementia ongoing not suffer from it.

Resolved – The Chair thanked Mike and Carly for the update and suggested they return to the committee with a further update later in the year.

37 Domestic Abuse Policy

Considered – A presentation from Jo Marriott, Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance Officer, and Hannah Heinemann, Head of Housing Delivery and Partnership on the domestic abuse policy.

Jo presented the aims and scope of the new policy, these included;

- To comply with new legislation - Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- Adopting best practice following Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Ensuring all residents/tenants experiencing domestic abuse receive an effective, consistent, and supportive housing response
- Enabling people affected by domestic abuse to access specialist support and reduce further harm
- Providing guidance for all staff in the Housing Service
- Applies to residents within the North Yorkshire area, North Yorkshire Council tenants and leaseholders, and North Yorkshire Council members
- Staff members affected by domestic abuse are not covered by this policy
- Background on the policy development

There then followed a discussion and members raised the following;

It was noted that this was an incredibly positive policy and members were pleased to see it. Members asked if vulnerable groups had been identified. This would be checked and noted with the aim of reducing barriers in coming forward.

It was asked if this would be delivered to all forward-facing staff. Domestic abuse training is available for other areas and whilst this training is housing specific it has been offered to customer service staff.

It was suggested this could also be offered to benefits staff in the longer term.

It was noted that working with other partners would be beneficial, for example, police, schools, teachers etc.

It was confirmed that there is a local partnership board under community safety, but perhaps there was a gap in the education sector. This feedback was welcomed and would be taken back and included.

Resolved – The Committee agreed unanimously to recommend to Council.

38 Work Programme

The work programme was discussed, and the following items were suggested as additions to the programme.

- Dementia refresh strategy
- KPI's on Staffing
- An update to the Committee from Mike Padgham
- Direct Payments
- Healthy Life Expectancy
- Home Care Market Development to Deliver Strategic Objectives
- Joint Scrutiny Work on the Dementia Strategy

It was noted that the Chair would be away for the mid cycle briefing on 2nd May and the Vice Chair agreed to take this meeting.

39 Any Other Items

The Chair noted that she would be unavailable to Chair the next Committee meeting on 19th June. The Vice Chair agreed that he would Chair this meeting.

40 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting is on 19th June 2024.

The meeting concluded at 12.25 pm.