

## **NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL**

**18 MARCH 2026**

### **STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN OF SCRUTINY OF HEALTH COMMITTEE**

The Scrutiny of Health Committee reviews matters relating to the planning, provision and operation of health services within the county, including Ambulance Trusts and the policies of the Health and Care Partnerships. 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 reports by providing feedback to the Integrated Care Boards and the NHS Trusts serving North Yorkshire on their performance and the experiences that the committee has had with them.

Since the last Council meeting in February 2026, the committee met once on 9 March, to consider the following items:

#### **Director of Public Health Annual Report 2024-2025**

A key item was the Director of Public Health's Annual Report which focussed on partnership working. Members welcomed its focus on the wider factors that shape people's health, such as housing, education, and access to local services. The Committee asked challenging but constructive questions about whether current partnership arrangements are always effective, especially where many organisations are discussing similar issues. Officers recognised these concerns but emphasised that close joint working is essential for delivering good outcomes across such a large and varied county. Members also explored how the council can strengthen its use of data, improve communication with the public, and address longstanding health inequalities within North Yorkshire. Further concerns were raised about long waits for autism and ADHD assessments, and members welcomed commitments to share the new Autism Strategy and the Public Health Peer Review action plan.

#### **Harrogate Acute Stroke Pilot Pathway Update**

The evidence demonstrated that the stroke pilot has significantly improved access to life-saving hyper-acute stroke care for residents, reducing delays and ensuring more people reach the right specialist centre quickly. Members recognised this as a clear example of patient-focused improvement. However, the Committee also heard about challenges affecting the sustainability of the pathway. York Hospital has experienced a major rise in admissions as a direct result of the pilot, putting pressure on its stroke service. The Committee agreed to write to the Secretary of State for Health to highlight the impact of the national funding formula, which currently disadvantages areas like North Yorkshire when commissioning specialist services such as stroke care.

#### **Humber and North Yorkshire ICB Update**

Members also received an update on the reorganisation of the Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (ICB). The new operating model is designed to streamline commissioning and strengthen decisions taken at local level. While the Committee understood the national context for the changes, members expressed concern about the loss of public-facing roles such as Foundation Trust governors and local Healthwatch representatives. Officers acknowledged the issue and highlighted the importance of strong local relationships between commissioners and communities during this period of change. The Committee made clear its expectation that patient engagement should remain a central part of NHS decision-making.

### **Other Items**

Alongside these items, members reviewed the latest Public Health performance data, discussed issues affecting children's mental health, and considered future topics for the work programme. The Committee also raised the need for better information about emergency mental health services, discharge arrangements, and pressures within community care.

The Committee will continue to monitor the actions agreed, including the outcome of the letter to the Secretary of State, and will revisit key issues as part of its forward planning.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW LEE