

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
16 May 2018

SCRUTINY OF HEALTH COMMITTEE – STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The committee last met on 16 March 2018 and a Mid Cycle Briefing was held on 27 April 2018. In addition, a closed meeting of the committee was held on 23 February 2018 to discuss mental health service provision and commissioning in the county.

Mental health services

The provision of good quality mental health services that are accessible and at least on a par with neighbouring areas continues to be an issue of concern for the committee. At the closed session of the committee on 23 February 2018, we heard that there had been over 2 decades of underinvestment in mental health services in the county. The legacy of this is that people in North Yorkshire are unable to access some basic mental health services and interventions, such as specialist community eating disorder services for adults or specialist personality disorder services, which are provided as the norm if you live just a matter of miles up the A19 in Middlesbrough.

The session was attended by some mental health service users. The insight that they were able to provide into the realities of mental health service provision, both good and bad, drove home to the committee how important it is that the necessary services are in place and of the highest standard.

The pause in the build of a new in-patient mental health facility at Cardale Park in Harrogate continues and the outcome of recent public engagement that has been undertaken by the Harrogate and Rural District Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the Tees Esk and Wear Valleys (TEWV) NHS Foundation Trust is eagerly awaited by the committee. I am sceptical that the new build in Harrogate will happen. I suspect that the final proposal will be that people either go to York or Middlesbrough to access specialist in-patient mental health services.

Friarage Hospital, Northallerton

The South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and the Hambleton Richmondshire and Whitby CCG are developing their proposals for the services that will be provided at the hospital. The review has been driven by a need to address shortages in Consultant Anaesthetists and A&E doctors. The committee is in regular contact with the commissioners and providers and it is anticipated that there will be a formal public consultation in the autumn.

I have been assured that the Friarage has a sustainable future and will continue to be a key provider of a range of in-patient and out-patient services in the north of the county.

Accountable Care Partnerships and Systems

The West Yorkshire and Harrogate (and Craven) and Durham Darlington Tees and Hambleton Richmondshire and Whitby STPs have each become Accountable Care Partnerships or Systems. The second of these as part of the larger NE and Cumbria system. It is not clear what this will mean for the development of health services for the people of North Yorkshire but there is a risk that NHS funding will be drawn towards or given to larger urban areas, such as Newcastle and Leeds. There are

also a number of questions about governance and how the NHS will support democratic decision making by the numerous councils that are covered by these new arrangements

At the meeting of the Durham Darlington Tees and Hambleton Richmondshire and Whitby STP Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 17 January 2018, we were informed by Alan Foster, the lead officer, that there had been a review of the approach to service reconfiguration in the area and the two hospital scenario for the southern half of the STP area had been abandoned in favour of a three hospital scenario. The three hospitals are the James Cook, Darlington Memorial Hospital and North Tees.

This was welcomed as it would mean that there was no longer any direct competition between the three sites. Since the meeting, however, we have heard nothing further. I have been told that this is because the NHS team are finalising the details of how the three hospitals will work together. I hope that this is not indicative of a change of direction and backtracking on the announcement that had been made.

Joint scrutiny arrangements are being setup for West Yorkshire and Harrogate (and Craven) and it is likely that the first meeting will be held in the summer. North Yorkshire will be an equal partner in this, where under previous arrangements we had been in attendance as observers only.

The Humber Coast and Vale STP appears to be focussing on managing the demand for in-patient hospital based care. This has led to the development of three sub-regions, based upon patient flows: Hull and East Riding; NE and N Lincolnshire; and the Vale of York and Scarborough.

NHS finances

The CCGs and acute providers that serve the population of North Yorkshire are continuing to experience significant financial problems. The four CCGs that commission health services for the most of the county have mounting deficits and have been engaging with the NHS on how they plan to reduce these deficits and return to a sound financial base. The committee will be scrutinising these plans over the summer.

Cllr Jim Clark
Chairman
Scrutiny of Health Committee
26 April 2018