

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

16 May 2018

CARE AND INDEPENDENCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

OLDER PEOPLES CHAMPION BRIEFING

I was delighted to take on the role of Older Peoples Champion shortly after being elected as new councillor in May 2016. Firstly, I want to pay tribute to the record and body of work that my predecessor, Shelagh Marshall achieved in her sixteen years in this role. We were fortunate to have had such a respected ambassador for North Yorkshire older peoples' interests. She has left big shoes for me to fill.

This briefing updates the committee on what has been a busy, but enjoyable first year. I have had to learn so much, and so quickly, about active ageing, older people's engagement and services. I have been helped in this by the many truly dedicated and committed people I have met, both from the community and staff from the council and our partners.

When I asked "...what is the role, what is expected of me" more often than not people said "the job is what you choose to make it". True, but essentially it's about raising the profile of older people and their needs within the Council and a range of partner agencies, organisations and user led groups.

I am very conscious that whilst this is a strategic role that should maintain a countywide focus on policies, strategies and service planning and delivery and how that meets the needs of older people, often the best way of getting to grips with a very complex subject like social care is to understand it through local activity.

Dementia is one of society's biggest challenges, especially so for North Yorkshire especially bearing in mind the demographic profile of the county. I have worked with Richmondshire Dementia, Action Alliance (at Mercury House, Richmond) working with the Alzheimer's Association, Dementia UK, Age UK. I know that work is underway on what happens as the current contract for Dementia Navigators comes to an end. Something I'm sure in which the committee will renew its interest.

I have attended 4 North Yorkshire Forum for Older People (NYFOP) at Sutton under White Stone Cliff.

I have attended Bring Me Sunshine meetings, Older and Vulnerable People meeting at Hawes and most recently Age Friendly Communities planning meeting with Mike Rudd (HAS) and Natalie Turner (from London).

I have also taken part in HAS stakeholders events held in Northallerton,

These are all key activities and initiatives in local communities which successfully contribute to older people's health and wellbeing, and which will be crucial if we are to meet that demographic challenge, and the NYCC 2020 programme. Here I would also highlight the contribution the stronger communities and the living well teams will make to reducing loneliness in older age in their communities. Loneliness is a massive public health issue which councils across the UK are beginning to take seriously.

Last week I met with Gillian Wall, Stronger Communities, to work on implementing the actions (regarding Older People) of the recently produced Leyburn town plan. I shall be carrying out research and working with Leyburn Good Neighbours Project.

Regarding unmet needs of older people, cutbacks affect services but there is a big disparity between what people expect and what they get. This is really people's expectations and standards and is difficult to deal with on a personal level.

I recently met with Richard Flinton regarding the possibility of a nursing home/residential home, daycare facilities and the possibility of an early years nursery in Wensleydale. There is a large, suitable area designated in the Local Plan for development. This was following on from a feasibility study with Mazaars of York to identify the needs of North Yorkshire, working with Dale Owen and Kathy Clark. The results of this project may not be fully clear until later in the year: I know the committee has this on its work programme.

Lynn Iverson, a clinical lead physiotherapist for community services in Hambleton and Richmondshire is liaising with me on how to improve Older peoples care in the Richmondshire area. We are looking at End of Life Care and Support. Perception v Reality. I have mentioned this to Cllr Jim Clark as Chair of the Scrutiny of Health Committee as I gather his committee completed a piece of scrutiny work on just this subject. I have also attended Dying Matters with Lincoln Sergeant.

I have also met with Andy McLoughlin from Broadacres to discuss the possibility of a daycare centre or adapted bungalows in Leyburn.

I regularly talk to Caroline Dickinson, portfolio holder for health etc.

Future plans

I hope to be working with Making Space to develop a Death Cafe in either Northallerton or Leyburn.

As a result of meeting with Richard Flinton, in May I met with Neil Irving, Mike Rudd and Shanna Carell with a view of looking at how we can progress working with

NYFOP. As it happens, in November I am speaking at the Harrogate NYFOP (they class themselves as ageing but active!) meeting regarding Safeguarding the interests of Older People.

In January I am speaking at a rotary dinner talking about my role as older People's Champion. I have already done one Rotary talk last year on my role.

Being on Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny and Scrutiny of Health Committees obviously helps my understanding of older peoples issues, but the role should not be limited to social care and health needs: it's about looking at the person in the round and the broad range of needs that an older person may have, such as access to transport, housing and adult education and learning. Also, one of the things that I find difficult is getting a countywide focus on policies and strategies for all the different areas of North Yorkshire.

For both these reasons I am looking at attending the area constituency committees, ACCs, by appointment, to liaise with them regarding the needs of older people in their areas.

This, to me, seems in keeping with the intended new culture of area committees. Members of NYFOP have asked me if they can have a representative on the appropriate area committees. This is shortly to be discussed.

I am of a mind to attend the Transport, Economy and Environment Scrutiny committee meetings to discuss the problem of transport in rural areas. I mentioned this to Cllr Mike Jordan when I similarly updated all Scrutiny Chairs on my work as Champion thus far.

There are now only 4 NYFOP's. Selby, Richmondshire and York have ceased to continue. It is pleasing that Loneliness and Isolation, and Dementia and Frailty are current issues that are being addressed at these meetings.

Last year I had the opportunity to meet with the Prime Minister, Theresa May. I told her I was North Yorkshire's Older People's Champion and I had the opportunity to ask her about what Brexit means for the Sustainable Transformation Plans.

KARIN SEDGWICK
Older Peoples Champion

County Hall,
NORTHALLERTON

30 April 2018
Background Documents - Nil