

Executive Member's response to questions

Question 1 - Has the Executive Member yet spoken/written to the relevant Minister with regard to the 'Two Week promise to see a cancer Specialist' as introduced under Labour and if he has not will he do so with some urgency and copy me into his correspondence?

'Following the revision of the NHS Operating Framework in June 2010, there was some concern that this involved the abolition of the Two-week promise to see a cancer specialist. On the 15th July, a spokesperson for the Department of Health confirmed that the cancer waiting time targets, including the time to see a cancer specialist, were clinically justified and had been retained. However, the previously announced Review of the Cancer Reform Strategy will no doubt be reviewing these targets with the wider aim of achieving better outcomes for cancer treatment and is due to report this winter. I believe that that would be the appropriate time to make representations, in the light of the report.'

Question 2 - Can the Executive Member explain how he sees the Council and himself working with the proposed GP Funder Groups when the Primary Care Trusts are dissolved?

'Although the legislation to implement the proposals in the White Paper "Liberating the NHS" has not yet been published, it is clearly crucial that we continue to work with representatives of both the PCT and the GPs to achieve a seamless transfer of responsibilities, which we also expect to include the transfer of responsibility for Public Health to local authorities, and to ensure that we have a joint and integrated approach to changes both in health and social care. The Executive has already approved the establishment of a local transition board under the oversight of the Chief Executive and the Executive meeting of the 14 December will be looking at the draft terms of reference of that new board. I am aware that the Board of the PCT share our commitment to ensure an orderly and well planned transition of not only GP led commissioning but also public health responsibilities to the local authority. The PCT Board are also considering the draft terms of reference at their December meeting. I am confident that the transition board will seek to ensure that, as we move to a new Health and Wellbeing Board for the city, systems and representation are in place to ensure new commissioning arrangements are both integrated and localised in tackling the specific health needs of our residents. I believe we start from a strong position in York and that all partners are keen to achieve the maximum benefit for the residents of York from the proposed changes.'

Question 3 - What understanding does the Executive Member have of the workings of and the value to York's older residents of the 'Older Persons Assembly' and can he explain if he sees their work as a core activity of Adult Social Services?

'York Older People's Assembly (YOPA) offer a useful point of access to the voice of older people in the city, not just for social care, but for all aspects of

older citizens lives, and as such is consulted by a number of bodies in York. I was pleased to be able to acknowledge this contribution when I was invited to speak to the Assembly earlier this year and to confirm that as a Council we wished this to be reflected in a service level agreement, which was subsequently concluded. The Assembly publishes a quarterly newsletter, which reaches over 4,000 people. It holds an annual 50+ Fair, offering information and celebrating the active lives of older people, and meetings throughout the year on a wide range of topics and issues of interest to older people.

In respect of social care, YOPA are active members of the Older People's Partnership Board, which meets bi monthly. The Board considers both health and social care matters, and has representatives from the Council and health partners (commissioners and providers), as well as from the voluntary sector and the carers' forum. YOPA, alongside other third sector partners have helped adult social care services identify priorities and supported the design for service improvement. They are a valued element in a strong third sector within the health and social care community in York, and the views of the older people they represent have helped shape the future development of older people's services in York. I believe that one of the values of organisations such as the Assembly is that they are not, and are not seen to be, part of the Council and I would therefore be reluctant to describe their work as part of the core activity of the Council's Adult Social Services, though making a much appreciated contribution to them.'