

Cabinet Member Report: Health, Housing & Adult Social Services

Since 9th May I have undertaken numerous briefing sessions with Directors, Assistant Directors and lead officers across the many areas in my portfolio.

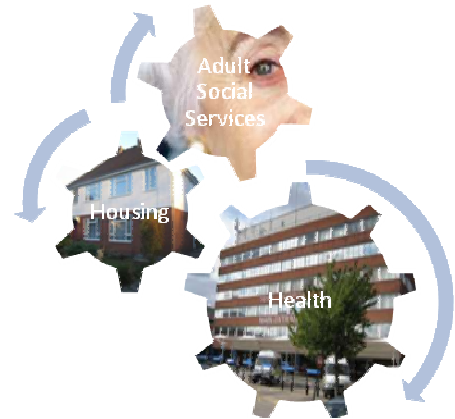
Officers have been open and honest and have welcomed being able to work on pledges in our manifesto and on those policies we have been supporting for a number of years.

I have recently attended:

- Centre for Women's Democracy, Leeds - for their project on female Councillors
- Local Government Yorkshire & Humber – Health & Wellbeing Member Group
- Self Direct Support Forum
- National Housing Conference in Harrogate
- Safeguarding Adults Board
- Healthy City Board

Over the coming weeks and months I am due to attend:

- Link York as a speaker
- Older Citizens Advocacy York AGM
- Full of Life Event
- Valuing People Board
- York People First
- Ageing Well Event
- Supporting People Board
- Leeds City Region HRA Board
- Local Government Information Unit Local Health Network
- The Rethink Forum (formally the National Schizophrenic Society) – guest speaker



I will also be meeting with:

Mike Proctor – York Hospital NHS Trust

Bill McCarthy – Yorkshire and Humber Strategic Health Authority

Rachael Johns – York and North Yorkshire PCT

Dr David Hayes – GP Commissioning Consortium Chair

Housing

Windows – The windows replacement programme is moving ahead with some of the first being fitted in Chapelfields and I have had positive feedback from residents about the work being undertaken. Officers have also worked to ensure that the 'black hole' that would have resulted from this work, due to the programme not being adequately funded, will not now happen due to the identification of savings and better allocation of funding within the Housing Revenue Account.

Taken as Seen policy – there has been a policy, going back some years, that new or moving tenants take a Council property 'as seen'. In numerous cases tenants move in and find defects that they have to tolerate under this policy. I have asked

officers to review this policy in order to ensure that when the Council lets out a property, that it is to a reasonable standard. In doing this we will help promote the image of the Council as a good landlord.

Solar Panels on CYC properties – The Heads of Terms were advertised in early May and the scheme will bring £7m investment into our homes that experience fuel poverty. Work is being undertaken to identify those who will be eligible for the scheme.

Tenancy Services – There will always be difficulties between some neighbours so I welcome the Mediation Service increasing the number of volunteer mediators as part of their plans to roll out the service more widely. All the new mediators have just completed their accreditation training. It is important that tenants are aware of this service and it is an area I will be asking for further promotion of.

Tenancy Enforcement is continuing to carry out evictions as a result of nuisance and continue to work in partnership within and across Council departments including recent work with the Temporary Accommodation Team and Children's Services to obtain an injunction against an individual who had threatened staff at one of the Hostels, and Children's Services have removed a number of children through the safeguarding process.

Homeless Services - Housing Options, based in the Customer Service Centre, continues to provide advice and information to all customers in housing need with a main focus being work to prevent homelessness by helping people stay in their own accommodation or moving in a planned way to alternative accommodation. This team provides advice on the mortgage rescue scheme. There are currently 97 households in temporary accommodation but this is likely to rise so I have asked officers to look at what pressures may be put on this service, and any help available, following changes to Housing Benefit and the rise to 80% market rents announced by the Coalition Government.

Temporary Accommodation – Work continues on the re-development of Howe Hill into a young persons 'Places of Change' hostel with a planned opening date of late September. This will be a multi-agency scheme in conjunction with Pathway Team, Youth Offending Team and Young People's Services. Ultimately the aim is to replace Ordnance Lane with a new build facility which will provide a purpose built young persons hostel and family accommodation.

Gypsy and Traveller Sites – Work has recently been undertaken to install individual electrical supplies and meters and make improvements to the water supply. This will be switched on in July.

Sub-Regional Choice Based Lettings – The 'Home Choice Scheme' is a sub regional Choice Based Letting Scheme which York is involved in with all district councils in North Yorkshire except Harrogate. The scheme went live on 20/6/2011 and York currently has 2500 applications. During the next couple of weeks all of these will be checked and letters will be sent to applicants advising them of the band they are in, together with a guide to the scheme. The first homes are to be advertised on 7th July.

I have requested that all those from the previous 'List' are contacted as there may be those who have found the process difficult. It is important that no resident with a 'need' is excluded.

Finance - A Sub-Contractor review including financial savings from glazing suppliers and materials suppliers is underway and repairs, voids and heating performance figures are still looking very good, placing us in the top 25% of councils for most services.

Private Sector Housing – Using funding from the Low Carbon Framework Programme the Council is preparing a bid for the Community Energy Saving Programme (CESP) for Hull Road Ward which is York's only eligible area. By providing £100k of match funding the Council will be able to draw down £300K worth of energy efficiency measures, including hard-to-treat measures such as solid wall insulation, for all homes in this area, irrespective of tenure. The proposed scheme will also complement the Council-wide Solar Panels Scheme.

Commuted Sum Payments – I have requested that Officers review the current 'pot' of Commuted Sum Payments, including those expected but not yet received, so that 'best use' can be made of the money to provide affordable homes in the city.

North Yorkshire and York Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) – is to report over the next few days. Similar to Fordham's SHMA it is expected to show that York needs a large number of affordable housing units per year. This is a major piece of research that will inform not only the LDF but also wider housing policies and trends across all sectors.

Empty Homes – Officers are working on a Policy Paper for autumn time to bring forward an 'Empty Homes Policy' which will use New Homes Bonus money to fund the works and legal costs required. Bringing an empty home back into use will attract further New Homes Bonus money for each property which can then be reinvested into further work. Work is being undertaken with colleagues in Finance.

Housing Development - Work has started at Derwenthorpe with the first homes due to be completed in early 2012

In May this year Housing Associations submitted "offers" to the Homes and Communities Agency's drastically cut budget for the delivery of new affordable housing for the period 2011-15. Many of the offers are non site specific and no decision has yet been announced by the HCA on which have been successful. Included in the offers made is the redevelopment of Ordnance Lane to include a Young Persons 'foyer'. I am, however, concerned that with future budget cuts, the Council will have to be creative to seek funds for future years work.

Health

Primary Care Trust (PCT) - Good progress has been made in the Council's liaison with the PCT and other health partners and an agreement has been reached on the transferring of funding. This will see increased investments over the next year including in the Council's Reablement Service – which helps people to gain the skills they need to remain at home, its Assessment Service for care packages and our Locality Home Care Service which provides almost 5000 hours care per week to 640 residents across the city.

These changing ways of working will leave the Council better placed than previously to meet the city's changing demographics and respond to the challenge of integrated

support services being provided speedily, to keep people in their own homes and facilitate returns home after hospital admissions.

Whilst the changes to the NHS have been subject to a “listening exercise”, local preparatory work has continued. A Transition Board co-chaired by the Chief Executives of City of York Council and the PCT has continued to meet covering key workstreams on commissioning, public health transfer, establishing a Health and Wellbeing Board and Healthwatch - a report to Cabinet in early October will make summary recommendations on all four workstreams. To aid this transition, I have agreed to the Council becoming part of an information and best practice sharing group at a Yorkshire and Humber Regional level through the LGYH Health & Wellbeing Group. I have also started to look at regional best practice on Public Health which will help with shaping the city’s health agenda as we move forward.

Adult Social Care

Celebrating York’s Older Residents - Changing demographics have and are often perceived and described as “a problem”. Here in York I am keen that we reverse this impression and celebrate the contribution that an increasingly ageing population can bring to the city. As part of this process, a photographic competition has taken place celebrating, through images, the roles of older people in society and resulted in a presentation at the Mansion House on the 27th June. I hope that this event can be built upon, working with individuals, families and support groups across the city.

Home Cooking- Residents, families and our own staff have praised the return to home cooked food to our Elderly Peoples Homes which has brought considerable benefits, including a better experience with more flexible mealtimes, greater individual choice and the welcoming smells of home cooking. On my recent visit to Windsor House the cook had baked buns for tea time and I was told that these small changes were greatly welcomed.

Finance - Due to recent year on year budget cuts, and a reduction in Government funding, extensive work has been undertaken by service managers to remodel staffing deployment in our Elderly Persons Homes which has led to achieved savings in the region of £700k, but importantly still retaining the same levels of care as before. Work has also been done to review the tendering of procurement of goods and is delivering a total of £768k savings in 2011-12. I would like to thank the staff for their help in this work.

Budgetary savings, amounting to around £200k, have also been made from service mergers and management restructuring in Learning Disability provider services. Again, these have been undertaken without impacting on service delivery and continue to receive very positive inspection findings. I would like to thank all who contributed to this work.

Telecare - Telecare in York is the fastest growing Telecare service in the region. Referral rates are up by 60%, with over 500 customers now benefiting from the independence and reassurance offered by their Telecare equipment, helping them stay independent in their homes for as long as possible. This scheme will be further funded and expanded thanks to the Labour Council’s commitment to increase Telecare by £250k per year.

Personalisation Agenda and Direct Payments - The rollout of the Personalisation Agenda and Direct Payments has continued in York and now all those who require services, irrespective of their customer group, are able to access self directed support. This means that every person who receives support, whether provided by statutory services or funded personally, will have choice and control over the shape of that support in all care settings through Direct Payments and Individual Budgets.

Adult Social Services has worked to increase efficiency and provide choice and control for residents who use the Council's services. Occupational Therapy and Community Equipment Services have been at the forefront of delivering these changes in 2010-11 and have launched an 'Online Self Assessment and Equipment Solution' to meet the pressures of changing demographics and needs of current and future users alongside service re-design to maximise the benefits of these new approaches.

Staffing Issues – The Council's staff are critically important to achieving high level quality services. The Adults Provision and Modernisation Service has continued to make improvements in the areas of supervision and appraisals of staff having achieved a 100% rate of appraisals in 2011-12 for its 730 staff. The implementation of the staff training and development pathway aimed at ensuring all see the opportunities and career benefits of continued professional development throughout the business area has shown great progress over 2010-11. We have also been successful in the embedding of Equalities Impact Assessments, with equality training and awareness undertaken within teams and included in training and team plans.

Monitoring – Finally, positive Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspections have been achieved under the new CQC regime for Care Service, Reablement Service and Sheltered with Extra Care Schemes. The final Self Assessment for CQC managed and produced by Adults performance teams showed progress in 3 of the 7 Outcome areas for Adults, with all being rated as good, and receiving a first excellent judgement in respect of "Making a Positive Contribution".

I know that all staff involved in these services worked hard to ensure we met the expected levels and they should be congratulated for their excellent work.

Councillor Tracey Simpson-Laing
Cabinet Member for Health, Housing and Adult Social Services
19th June, 2011