

April 2008 will see the creation of LINKs for each local authority with Social Services responsibility. At the moment City of Council and North Yorkshire County Council are collaborating on a joint tendering arrangement to identify a host organisation for the two authorities: the host may serve both authorities or either one and expressions of interest have been received from a range of organisations. The Health Scrutiny Committee and officers from the Council are hosting an event for people and organisations in York who are interested in LINKs on 31st January. LINKs have a much wider remit than the Patient and Public Involvement Forums which had been appointed for each NHS Trust, PCT and Ambulance Trust where they were only concerned with health issues. LINKs will also be concerned with social services and in the current environment where health and wellbeing cuts across all aspects of the work of local authorities a well informed LINKs should be seen as a major asset to the work of all public service provider bodies.

The remit for LINKs will enable all voluntary and community organisations to work together to promote health and wellbeing and to ensure the needs of people who are not normally consulted about their health and wellbeing needs are heard. The event on 31st January had been requested by local organisations and I am pleased that officers have been able to respond so positively to that request as well as using resources efficiently and effectively by collaborating with North Yorkshire CC and building on the work they have already undertaken.

Work is now underway on the Annual Healthcheck required by the Healthcare Commission, and I am attempting to meet PPI Forums to hear about their comments. We do not have the resources or expertise to comment on all standards assessed in the Annual Healthcheck and I hope that we will be able to ensure that Trusts are fulfilling their legal obligations to consult with patients and service users in a significant way as services are changed and developed.

The presentation from Dr Peter Brambleby the Director of Public Health at the PCT was interesting and his offer to come to a workshop to discuss clinical guidelines for treatments and how they are managing the enlarged

provision of services in the community was welcome. The workshop format will enable patient and community groups to engage in the dialogue and share their knowledge and expertise with Dr Brambleby which I am sure will be helpful and informative for members of the Committee too. The Workshop is to be held on Monday 18th February at 4.00 pm and I hope that we will be able to involve a wide range of community and voluntary groups who are concerned in any way with health and wellbeing.

As a result of a question from a member of the Older People's Assembly, Dr Brambleby informing the Committee that the largest part of their budget was spent on mental health services, and information shared at our consultation in August where it was noted that managing Alzheimer's disease was a major challenge for the Council. The Committee are minded to review services for older people and mental health. The focus should be about how the partnerships between the Hospital, PCT and Council are working together to ensure best care for this growing number of people. Provision of services for people with musculoskeletal disorders will also be reviewed.