

North Yorkshire County Council
Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee
19 June 2017

Overview and Scrutiny at North Yorkshire County Council

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Members of the Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a summary of how overview and scrutiny is undertaken at the Council, the way in which subjects for scrutiny are identified, why it is important and what role committee Members have to play.

This report provides Members with details of some of the specific responsibilities and powers relating to this committee and also a copy of the committee work programme for review and comment.

Overview and Scrutiny

The Local Government Act 2000 first introduced the requirement for every local authority to include provision for at least one scrutiny committee. Under this Act and associated legislation, scrutiny can make recommendations to the executive and other local bodies. The committees also have the power to question Cabinet members, Council officers and representatives of other organisations, such as health and community safety agencies. The committees can also investigate any issue which affects the local area or its residents.

For more detail on the roles and responsibilities of the overview and scrutiny committees have, please refer to the North Yorkshire County Council Constitution – <http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/article/24041/The-council-constitution>

Why it is important

Overview and scrutiny provides an important check and balance, helping to ensure that the decisions made by the executive reflect the needs of local people, are financially robust and are in keeping with the strategic priorities and responsive to the operational demands of the Council.

Where overview and scrutiny is not active, engaged and inquisitive, then there is a risk that some strategic and operational issues could be overlooked and opportunities for early intervention and action missed. Examples of where this has occurred in other local authorities, albeit at the extreme, include: child sexual exploitation in Rotherham MBC; poor care and high mortality rates at Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust; and governance failings in Tower Hamlets LBC.

How it contributes to the Council's outcomes

In addition to being an important check and balance and providing early warning, scrutiny aims to contribute to the Council's corporate outcomes in many other ways, including:

- Enabling Councillors to become directly involved in the development of: policy and strategy; consultation and public engagement planning; and the performance management of the Council
- Keeping Councillors and the public informed of key issues, priorities and initiatives
- Enabling direct engagement with the people of North Yorkshire
- Acting as a critical friend and providing Cabinet Members and senior officers with a non-partisan forum in which to test out ideas, approaches and gain feedback and suggestions
- Providing a structure, through the call-in process, for scrutinising specific decisions of the Executive
- Scrutinising issues of public concern beyond the remit of the Council.

The overview and scrutiny committees

There are five thematic overview and scrutiny committees, each of which meet in public four times a year, as below:

- Transport, Economy and Environment – focussed upon transport and communications infrastructure, supporting business and helping people develop their skills, sustainable development, climate change, countryside management, waste management, environmental conservation and cultural issues.
- Corporate and Partnerships - the Council's corporate organisation and structure, resource allocation, asset management, procurement policy, people strategy, equality and diversity, performance management, communications, partnership working, community development and engagement and community safety (as the designated Crime and Disorder Committee).
- Young People – focussed upon the interests of young people, including education, care and protection and family support.
- Care and Independence – focussed upon the needs of vulnerable adults and older people and people whose independence needs to be supported by intervention from the public or voluntary sector.
- Health - focussed upon the planning, provision and operation of health services in the County with the aim of acting as a lever to improve the health of local people and ensuring that the needs of the local people are considered as an integral part of the delivery and development of health services.

Overview and scrutiny functions are also supported through the following bodies:

- Scrutiny Board – this is made up of the Chairs of the five thematic overview and scrutiny committees and enables work to be co-ordinated, opportunities for joint scrutiny to be identified, and committee Chairs to act as critical friends.

- Police and Crime Panel - which scrutinises the Police and Crime Commissioner. There is also a Complaints Sub-Committee which meets on an ad hoc basis.
- Looked After Children's Members Group – this is not a formal committee but acts as an informal advisory group to the Executive Portfolio Holder for Children's and Young Peoples Services. The group performs a role consistent with statutory guidance for local authorities to promote the health and well-being of looked-after children.

Mid Cycle Briefings

In addition to formal meetings of the committees, there is also a system of Mid Cycle Briefings. A Mid Cycle Briefing enables the Chair, Vice Chair and Spokespersons for each committee to meet in private four times a year to: discuss the work of the committee; identify areas for in-depth scrutiny; and have an early discussion with commissioners and providers about topics that may be confidential or under development.

Different approaches to overview and scrutiny

In addition to formal committee meetings and Mid Cycle Briefings, there are a number of approaches that overview and scrutiny can take, including:

- Task and finish groups – these are informal, time-limited bodies comprised of councillors that are established by the committee to undertake a discrete piece of scrutiny work and then report back their findings and recommendations.
- In-depth scrutiny review – this is when the committee undertakes a prolonged and detailed piece of work, which includes: desktop research; expert witnesses, typically commissioners and providers; service/site visits; and engagement with service users. This approach combines formal committee meetings and the use of a sub-group.
- Select Committee – where an overview and scrutiny committee works as a whole committee to address a particular issue. Typically, this would involve a one-off meeting lasting a day where a range of expert witnesses are invited to attend and give evidence. The committee members then analyse the evidence given and make recommendations for improvements.
- Call-in – this is when non-executive members of the Council can have decisions of the Executive considered by a scrutiny committee.
- Joint scrutiny – this is when there is an issue that is directly relevant to more than one overview and scrutiny committee and so a collaborative approach is taken. This can be internal or external. External joint scrutiny is often undertaken by the Scrutiny of Health Committee.

Role of committee members

All the members of an overview and scrutiny committee have a key role to play in ensuring that Council and other public sector services are delivered effectively, efficiently and that they achieve good outcomes for local people. The things that committee members can do, include:

- Contributing to the development of the committee's work programme, providing constructive challenge and suggesting topics for inclusion
- Actively engaging with all stages of the scrutiny process, including any additional groups or meetings that are setup outside of the scheduled, formal meetings of the committee
- Developing constructive relationships with other members of the committee, the relevant portfolio holders and service leads
- Working apolitically as a committee, with a strong focus upon service improvement and outcomes
- Receiving the data, information and analysis that is presented in an impartial manner
- Assessing the data, information and analysis presented to the committee and testing the conclusions that are drawn
- Contributing to the development of recommendations, based on the committee's deliberations, which are specific, realistic and relevant.

Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee have a specific legal duty, under the Police and Justice Act 2006, to act as the crime and disorder overview and scrutiny committee. This means that the committee has the power to:

- Review or scrutinise decisions made, or action taken, in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions
- Make reports or recommendations to the local authority with respect to the discharge of those functions.

Work programme

The topics for overview and scrutiny are identified by the committee Chairs, Vice-Chairs, Spokespersons and Members, advised by the relevant overview and scrutiny officer, using some of the following sources of information:

- Performance data, information and analysis, in particular when it has been benchmarked against similar local authorities
- Inspection reports, such as those produced by the Care Quality Commission or OFSTED
- National research findings
- National policy changes
- National and local consultations and public engagement events
- County Council Plan
- County Council budget and delivery against savings proposals and targets

- Agendas for Executive
- Local issues raised by elected members, members of the public or highlighted in the media
- Local networks and partnerships.

Where an initial area of interest or line of inquiry is identified, further information is gathered to ascertain whether this is a valid area for scrutiny that will add value and not duplicate work that is already underway.

On every agenda for formal meetings of the overview and scrutiny committees, there is an item on the committee work programme. This provides Members with an opportunity to reflect on the issues that have been identified and assure themselves that they are appropriate for the committee.

The work programme for this committee is in Appendix 1.

Further information

Further information on Overview and Scrutiny is available on the North Yorkshire County Council website - <http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/article/23665/Scrutiny>

The overview and scrutiny officer supporting the work of this committee is:

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Committee papers are available from the North Yorkshire County Council website as follows - <http://democracy.northyorks.gov.uk/>

Recommendation

That Members review the Committee's work programme, taking into account issues highlighted in this report, the outcome of discussions on previous agenda items and any other developments taking place across the County.

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8 May 2017

Corporate & Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Work Programme Schedule 2016/17 & 2017/18

Scope

The Council's corporate organisation and structure, resource allocation, asset management, procurement policy, people strategy, equality & diversity, performance management, communication and access to services.

Partnership working, community development, community engagement, community strategies and community safety. This Committee shall be the Crime & Disorder Committee for the purposes of Part 3 of the Police and Justice Act 2006.

Meeting dates

Scheduled Committee Meetings		16 January 2017 10:30am	3 April 2017 10:30am	19 June 2017 10.30am	11 September 2017 10.30am	11 December 2017 10.30am	12 March 2018 10.30am
Scheduled Mid Cycle Briefings Attended by Group Spokespersons only	5 December 2016 10:30am	27 Feb 2017 10:30am		31 July 2017 10.30am	30 October 2017 10.30am	22 January 2018 10.30am	23 April 2018 10.30am
Agenda Briefings - will be held at 9.30am on the day of the committee meeting							

Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Work Programme Schedule 2016/17 & 2017/18

Reports

16 January 2017 – Committee	
Theme	Description
Insurance	Overview of the outcome of the insurance tender in 2016, together with an analysis of the claims experience, risk exposure and management - Fiona Sowerby
2020 Council – Customer access	2020: Customer - Progress against the 2020 target of 70% of contact being managed by customers using digital self-service channels with the remainder supported through “assisted digital” channels - Julie Blaisdale and Sarah Foley, Customer Programme Manager
27 February 2017 – Mid Cycle Briefing	
Theme	Description
2020 Council – Partnerships and Traded services	Overview of partnership arrangements and traded services – how things are shaping up – Gary Fielding
Data Sharing	Prevention Service – tracking children and young people who are not in school and may be at risk of harm – Julie Firth
Insurance	Insurance claims analysis – Fiona Sowerby
3 April 2017 – Committee	
Theme	Description
Community Safety - Reoffending	Transforming Rehabilitation - Changes to the Probation Service – Louise Johnson, National Probation Service, North Yorkshire
Community Safety – Blue light collaboration	Proposed collaboration of Blue Light Services Review plans for the merger of North Yorkshire Constabulary and North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service – Julia Mulligan, Police and Crime Commissioner

Tobacco Control	Tobacco Control Strategy – community safety and Tobacco Control Partnership – Emma Davis (Public Health) and Andy Robson (Trading Standards)
19 June 2017 - Committee	
Theme	Description
2020 Council - Annual Workforce Plan	Review of annual plan – Justine Brooksbank
2020 Council – Customer access	Progress against the 2020 target of 70% of contact being managed by customers using digital self-service channels with the remainder supported through “assisted digital” channels - Julie Blaisdale and Sarah Foley, Customer Programme Manager – 6 month update
Community Safety - Youth Justice Strategic Plan	Strategic overview – future plans – annual consideration of crime and disorder matters – Julie Firth
Locality Budgets	Future delivery – Neil Irving
Corporate Risk Register	Review of corporate risk register – distribute with papers as ‘For information only’
31 July 2017 – Mid Cycle Briefing	
Theme	Description
Community Safety - Prevent	Progress to date and future plans (previously to MCB in September 2015) – Neil Irving and Odette Robson
Stronger Communities	Stronger Communities Annual Report 2016/17 – Neil Irving, Mark Taylor and Adele Wilson-Hope
Community safety – Blue light collaboration	Draft committee response to consultation on more formal collaboration between North Yorkshire Constabulary and North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service – Daniel Harry
11 September 2017 - Committee	
Theme	Description
Community Safety - NYCSP	Update on the North Yorkshire Community Safety Partnership, including: implementation of Delivery Plan; partnership working; impact – Odette Robson and Dr Justin Ives.
Equality and Diversity	Overview of progress with achievement of the Council’s Equality and Diversity objectives – Neil Irving and Deb Hugill

2020 Council - New ways of working	Roll out of Modern Council including new IT Kit for Elected Members, paperless office – follow up to presentation at 3 October 2016 committee meeting - Robert Ling - TBC
North Yorkshire Syrian Refugee Settlement Programme	Update on progress - follow up to presentation at 3 October 2016 committee meeting – Jonathan Spencer - TBC
Local government funding	Business rate retention and fairer funding for local government – Gary Fielding
30 October 2017 – Mid Cycle Briefing	
Theme	Description
County Council Plan 2017/21	Progress with implementation (first 6 months) and further develop (year 2) – Neil Irving and Deb Hugill
2020 Council – Partnerships and Traded services	Overview of partnership arrangements and traded services – how things are shaping up – Gary Fielding
2020 Council – Health and Safety	Overview of restructures, training and awareness raising and risks – Stuart Langston
11 December 2017 - Committee	
2020 Council – Community Libraries	Review of first 6 months of operation - Chrys Mellor, General Manager, Libraries
22 January 2018 – Mid Cycle Briefing	
12 March 2018 - Committee	
Community safety	Formal collaboration of Blue Light Services - review of progress made with the implementation of plans for collaboration between North Yorkshire Constabulary and North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service – Julia Mulligan, Police and Crime Commissioner
23 April 2018 – Mid Cycle Briefing	

Areas of overview and scrutiny that do not yet have a confirmed date for committee:

- Rationalisation of NYCC property portfolio
- NYCC advertising and engagement

- Devolution – proposals and progress to date
- Performance management framework – progress to date – Gary Fielding
- 2020 Council - Review of Procurement annual plan – Gary Fielding and Kevin Draisey
- Mobile post office coverage in North Yorkshire – Michael Renshaw, Post Office Field Advisor
- Bank branch closures and access to banking services
- Implementation of the Police and Crime Plan 2017 to 2020 – Julia Mulligan.