

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

21 FEBRUARY 2007

SCRUTINY BOARD

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The Scrutiny Board met on 30 January 2007.

Finance and Central Services strategic issues

The Scrutiny Board welcomed County Councillor Carl Les together with John Moore, Corporate Director – Finance and Central Services. They highlighted the current and strategic issues facing these services over the next 12 months.

Discussion with the Scrutiny Board included:

- Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Proposal for a unitary council
- Capital plan
- Partnership governance
- ICT
- Local Area Agreement
- Job evaluation
- Transformation and Bright Office strategy

Developing the role of scrutiny following the Local Government White Paper

The Board considered four key areas for development in relation to scrutiny following publication of the White Paper and with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill now making progress through Parliament. These are:

- Area scrutiny
- Community Calls for Action
- Scrutiny of partners and partnerships
- Central and strategic scrutiny

Although the legislation is not likely to be passed until the summer and final guidance and the new legal powers will not take effect until April 2008 members of the Board took the view that it is important to stay ahead of the game. Accordingly the Board has agreed to set up a small working group of Scrutiny Chairmen and officers to work up some practical proposals and to review and update the Scrutiny protocols as necessary. I hope this work will also inform debate on the wider White Paper agenda.

Overview and scrutiny in the proposal for a single unitary council

While the arrangements for scrutiny in a unitary council have only been outlined in the proposal document, and any decisions will be made by the new council if it goes ahead, Board members felt that their experience and views would be valuable in working up more detailed proposals once it is known if there is to be a new council.

Scrutiny work programme for 2007

The Board looked at the summary work programmes for all Overview and Scrutiny Committees for the year ahead. This provides the framework for planning the work of scrutiny during 2007. It will be used flexibly and may be adjusted as new priorities emerge.

The range of topics is wide but they focus on the County Council's overriding objective to deliver excellent and efficient services that respond to the needs of individuals and communities across North Yorkshire. I am sure that this programme will ensure that Overview and Scrutiny will continue to contribute to improving outcomes over the year ahead.

**County Councillor John Blackie
Chairman of the Scrutiny Board
12 February 2007**