

# NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

16 MAY 2007

## SCRUTINY BOARD

### STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

#### **Annual Report**

Attached to this statement is my Annual Report to the County Council on Overview and Scrutiny and covers the period from January 2006 to March 2007. It provides a very positive account of Overview and Scrutiny at the County Council and I commend it wholeheartedly to you.

#### **Corporate strategic issues**

The Scrutiny Board met on 1 May 2007 and welcomed the Leader, County Councillor John Weighell together with John Marsden, Chief Executive. They highlighted the key strategic issues facing the County Council over the next 12 months.

Discussion with the Scrutiny Board included:

- Engagement at a national level with the County Councils Network
- Engagement with regional bodies including:
  - Yorkshire Forward
  - Regional Assembly
  - Local Government Yorkshire and Humber
  - City Regions, especially Leeds
- Local Government Review
- Medium Term Financial Strategy
  - Comprehensive Spending Review
  - Efficiencies and Transformation
  - Demand pressures
- Economic prosperity in the sub region, especially coastal areas
- Enabling infrastructure such as NYNET, transport and social cohesion
- Partnerships and delivering the Local Area Agreement

#### **The role of scrutiny following the Local Government White Paper**

As I said in my last report to the County Council the Board has taken the view that it is important to stay ahead of the game following the publication of the Local Government White Paper, currently making its passage as a Bill through Parliament. This will ensure we make the best possible use of the enhanced powers the Government envisages for Overview and Scrutiny at the earliest possible time they are made available.

Accordingly the Board set up a small working group of Scrutiny Committee Chairmen and officers to work up some practical proposals, and to review and update the Scrutiny protocols as necessary. The group has met twice and is making good progress in looking at models of best practice and adapting them to our own requirements.

Given the widening and increasingly important remit of the working group it has now been agreed to invite all Scrutiny Committee Chairmen to join future meetings.

**Next Scrutiny Forum – Wednesday 19 September – Not to be Missed !!**

We had had 3 hugely successful Scrutiny Forums in this Council and the Board has now agreed on the subject and style of the next Forum.

It is planning a really innovative and exciting exploration of the implications of Community Calls for Action for Scrutiny. This is one of the new powers to be implemented from April 2008 when the proposals in the Local Government White Paper are placed on the Statute Book, and will most definitely impact on all Members in their community leadership role.

The Forum will be assisted by a facilitator skilled in inter-personal and communicative events, and be highly inter-active and involve role play. It will be one of those occasions that could turn out to be an outstanding and absolutely rip-roaring success or it might fall completely flat on its face. Either way, for the sake of inquisitiveness, it will worth coming along just to see where it finally lands on the spectrum of Triumph - Disaster !!

We need 3 or 4 County Councillors to assist in the Forum in the planning of the Event and on the day itself so in view of my comments in the previous paragraph perhaps only those who have the ability to have a laugh on themselves need apply !! Those keen on taking the risk could they please identify themselves to me in the next couple of weeks or so?

We also need to break the record for attendance at a Member Seminar / Training event, held by the first Scrutiny Forum at 42 members, so please could everybody note that date in the Diary, **Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> September, starting at 10.00am and concluding with a nice lunch by 1.00pm**, and come along for a morning which promises to be a bit of fun, and potentially a learning exercise for us all, possibly in how not to do it for real !!

**County Councillor John Blackie  
Chairman of the Scrutiny Board  
8 May 2007**