

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

13 October 2010

SCRUTINY BOARD

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The Scrutiny Board met on 1 October 2010.

Role of Scrutiny Board

As this was the first meeting of the Scrutiny Board following the recent change in the number of Overview and Scrutiny committees it was a good opportunity to review the role and function of the Board in support of the scrutiny function.

The Board considered the changed policy context and what this means in terms of future challenges for scrutiny. In particular we looked at the implications for scrutiny of:

- Financial cutbacks
- Place-based budgeting/community budgeting (formerly known as Total Place)
- Abolition of Comprehensive Area Assessment
- The forthcoming Localism and Decentralisation Bill
- Health White Paper
- Elected Police Commissioners replacing police authorities
- The Big Society

The Board agreed that as the reconfigured committees are now much more closely aligned to Executive portfolios it is not necessary to invite Executive Members and their Corporate Director to the Board on an annual basis. However, the Board did wish to invite the Chief Executive to attend from time to time to provide a corporate overview of the challenges facing the County Council and to discuss how scrutiny could make a contribution.

The Board agreed to review the guidelines for scrutiny task groups, particularly the scoping document, to ensure that the resourcing implications of proposed pieces of work are fully considered before they start.

The Board agreed to include a short report from each Chairman at each meeting to enable opportunities for cross-cutting and shared working to be maximised.

Given the smaller number of committees and the importance of ensuring that each committee is represented at the Scrutiny Board it was agreed that Vice Chairmen would substitute if a Chairman was unable to attend for any reason.

Members Regional Scrutiny Network

County Councillor Tony Hall reported back to the Board on a recent meeting of Scrutiny Chairs from across the region. The meeting had focused on the changing role of scrutiny and the contribution it could make to transparency and accountability, particularly in relation to Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and City Regions. The Members present had resolved to meet again soon as a network and had also proposed that a small delegation of scrutiny Members representing each of the sub-regions should meet with Leaders to explore the opportunities for scrutiny to contribute to the governance and accountability of LEPs.

North Yorkshire Scrutiny Officers' Network

The Board received an update on the work of the scrutiny officers' network. The Board was pleased to hear how joint working is encouraged wherever possible and that information about prospective and completed scrutiny reviews is shared via the County Council's website. It was agreed that the list of current reviews by each council would be circulated with the agenda for each meeting of the Board.

The Board fully supports joint working with other councils which is even more important as resources become tighter. The Board agreed to support arrangements for a joint event early in 2011 to bring together scrutiny Members from across the sub-region to promote working together.

County Councillor John Blackburn
Chairman of Scrutiny Board
4 October 2010