

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

20 July 2011

SCRUTINY BOARD

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The Scrutiny Board met on 6 July 2011 and the following items were considered.

Regional Network Event

I fed back to the Board about the most recent Regional Scrutiny Event I had attended which focused on 'self regulation'. You can see why Government has decided to reduce the burdens on local government to report to inspectors on performance when it was costing the tax payer over £2billion a year. However just because the national targets appear to be gone that does not mean that the County Council can rest on its laurels. I am certain that the County Council continues to monitor performance and will act accordingly to ensure continued improvement but it is the role of Overview and Scrutiny to ask the challenging questions not only of our own Executive but also of partners providing services on behalf of the County Council.

Equalities Impact Assessments

The Corporate & Partnerships O&SC are intending to look at the Council's Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process to make sure that it is being used effectively and that equality issues are being considered when drawing up policies or proposals which affect the delivery of services. This is a key piece of scrutiny work and will of course cut across all Directorates. We look forward to hearing the findings in due course.

Involvement of Overview and Scrutiny Committees in the Budget Planning Process

We discussed how Overview and Scrutiny Committees are involved in the budget planning process and agreed that it was important to be looking ahead to be involved for the years 2013/14 and 2014/15. We agreed that each Committee should examine the budget savings most closely related to their service area and take this into consideration when developing their forward work programme.

Scrutiny of proposals for the future of the libraries service

Over recent months the Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee has reviewed proposals regarding the future of the library service. Management for this service has now passed to the Assistant Chief Executive Policy Performance & Partnerships. However to maintain continuity at political leadership level County Councillor Chris Metcalfe will retain this portfolio in the short term.

In the short term then it would make sense for the Care & Independence to 'see through' the current proposals and their immediate impact but looking longer term this responsibility will pass to the Corporate & Partnerships O&SC. To ensure a smooth transition, briefings on libraries issues will be sent to the group spokespersons of each Committee. Scrutiny Board is in full agreement with this approach.

Proposed Joint District / County Scrutiny Members event.

We are looking to hold a joint District / County scrutiny Member event in the Autumn this year and as a change to previous years this really is a learning event to find out about Broadband in North Yorkshire. The objective will be to build up our understanding of the potential that Broadband offers and give us an opportunity to network with colleagues from across the County on this important development.

County Councillor John Blackburn
Chairman of Scrutiny Board
July 2011