

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

24 July 2013

SCRUTINY BOARD

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

1. At the time of writing this statement the first meeting of Scrutiny Board since County Council in May and my first as Chairman of Scrutiny Board has not taken place – that is not until Wednesday 17 July 2013. Consequently I have not really been able to share my thoughts with fellow Chairmen. However, I do feel the Board has an important role to play in providing an opportunity for the Chairmen and the Older People and the Young People Champions to come to together to share ideas, promote best practice and co-ordinate work across the Committees.
2. This sharing of ideas has never been more important against a background of the budget difficulties facing the whole of the public sector. But there are also developments taking place across the County that we can be much more upbeat about. I particularly have in mind the Tour de France and its potential longer term legacy in terms of the economy, leisure and health. The roll out of Super-Fast Broadband and the benefits it could bring in terms of supporting local entrepreneurs, SMEs, reducing travel and helping to build sustainable local communities. We also have a Local Enterprise Partnership and the County Council's new Public Health role and a Health and Wellbeing Board.
3. The Statements from my fellow Chairmen demonstrate that the above developments are very much on their "radar screens". Scrutiny Board can help spot where they are interrelated and play a part in ensuring the many cross cutting issues are not overlooked, including the need to work in partnership across the public, private and voluntary sectors.
4. Finally, I am pleased to present our Scrutiny Annual report (attached at Annex 1). I hope you find it a useful and informative.

County Councillor Elizabeth Casling
Chairman: Scrutiny Board

08 July 2013



Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report April 2012 – March 2013

July 2013

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NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report, April 2012 – March 2013

Introduction

This Scrutiny Annual Report is about looking back ...reviewing what overview and scrutiny has done over the past year. Each of the Chairmen has written a statement that summarises the scrutiny their Committee has undertaken whether that is looking at policy, performance or focussed on a particular issue. It is also about looking forward and I have included a section that summarises some of the work planned by the Committees over the coming year. As 2013 has been an election year for the County Council we have new County Councillors and new roles for some. This is my first annual report but as a previous Chairman of a scrutiny Committee I am aware of the important and valued place Overview and Scrutiny has within the Council.

The future brings with it new challenges for the County Council as it continues to deliver excellent services but with increasing budget constraints. Some difficult decisions will have to be taken by the County Council over the next 4 years and Overview and Scrutiny has its part to play in that decision making process. We have to be innovative and flexible, and we have to meet the demands placed upon us by the people of North Yorkshire, to ensure that decisions at NYCC are taken based on sound evidence, and that officers and the Executive, are held to account.

Now the elections are behind us I would call on all Members to get involved in overview and scrutiny. Read this annual review and it will give you a glimpse into overview and scrutiny at NYCC. Remember accountability is not simply about publishing data it is about ensuring that the Council delivers on the objectives identified within the Council Plan:

To:

- ensure good access for all;
- help people to live in safe communities;
- help all children and young people to develop their full potential;
- promote a flourishing economy;
- maintain and enhance our environment and heritage; and
- improve health and wellbeing and give people effective support when they need it.

May I take this opportunity to thank my predecessor County Councillor John Blackburn for the sterling work he did in championing Overview and Scrutiny. To all those Members, officers, partners and external representatives that have assisted Overview and Scrutiny in the past year thank you for your hard work and invaluable contributions. I hope that you will continue your support of the Committees as we step into a new County Council.



**County Councillor Liz Casling
Chairman Scrutiny Board**

Care and Independence

Scope:

The needs of vulnerable adults and older people and people whose independence needs to be supported by intervention from the public or voluntary sector.

By focussing on the most vulnerable members of society, County Councillor Don Mackenzie, the previous chair, and his Committee have set a high standard to follow. They demonstrated a determination to address the changes to social care, driven as they are by: major reductions in local government budgets; an increase in demand for care services brought about by demographic growth of the older people and learning disability populations; and an increased need for organisations to work together.

During its consideration of the County Council's response to the National Autism Strategy for Adults "Fulfilling and Rewarding lives", the Committee saw evidence of the fresh approach the new legislation demands, and a reversal of the trend of individuals being placed out of County - which was not always in the best interests of families and communities.

When it looked at the commissioning practices of the Health and Adult Services Directorate (HAS), the Committee welcomed efforts to devolve responsibility to individuals (via personal budgets) and collaboration with providers to broaden the market of care services, particularly small social enterprises, so that individuals can exercise a real choice.

In 2012, when reviewing the Joint Carer's Strategy, Members applauded the efforts of the County Council and the then PCT, to engage with and support carers. Our attention must now be on the action plan, which ought to be robust enough to secure the necessary resources and commitment.

Early intervention and preventative measures are seen as the most cost effective way to safeguard people's wellbeing in the long-term. We will be looking to see how HAS - with the findings from the first round of Innovation Fund schemes at hand - develops cost effective interventions that achieve better outcomes at lower cost, not just by its own efforts, but also through other local authority services, such as community centres, libraries, leisure and other activities.

All Councillors share a responsibility for Safeguarding and Scrutiny Members in particular must ensure that arrangements for vulnerable adults are effective. The Committee fulfils this role by reviewing the Annual Report to the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Board. Last year, Members concluded that the Board had assessed priorities effectively and produced an action plan to deliver it. The previous Committee has asked its successor to commit to an intensive in-depth review on the financial abuse of adults

This year sees the third year of the publication of the Local Account, a public self-assessment of the County Council's performance in social care and a regime of monitoring rather different from the previous centralist, target-based method of previous years. Members thought that, in the published version, the Portfolio Holder and HAS had got the balance right between performance data and narrative. I am pleased that we will be involved at an even earlier stage in this year's process.

Two significant issues touched upon last year - the funding of care and the integration of health public and social care teams by 2018 – will remain on our agenda, because helping people, carers, families and communities support themselves, with the care and support they need to retain or regain dignity and involvement, may be as crucial as at any time in living memory.



County Councillor Patrick Mulligan
Chairman Care & Independence O&SC

Young People

Scope:

The interests of young people, including education, care and protection and family support.

There are approximately 138,000 children and young people in North Yorkshire all of whom are very much a part of our local communities. Whether they live in the two main urban centres, market towns or the rural areas of North Yorkshire the County Council's aim is to ensure children and young people are safe, have the services they need available to them and secure good prospects for the future.

The Committee undertook a scrutiny review on *Youth Participation* focussed on Youth Councils in the county. A Task Group of Members met and consulted with a number of young people who shared their thoughts and views on a variety of subjects especially youth participation and why young people should be involved, and part of the decision making process for all services, not just the services they use. On reading the final report the Youth Council said, *"It is great to see young people on the County Council's agenda" and "the report reflects well the fact that young people who do become involved in Youth Councils feel they are able to make a difference for other young people like themselves, which is an important motivation for their future involvement."*

The committee's Work Programme over the past twelve months has spanned a range of issues and the following is a short digest of some of the overview reports and briefings received:

- The Children's Social Care Transformation Strategy, which described the developments and actions taken to improve outcomes for children and their families.
- Changes to the adoption process – Members discussed with officers the government's proposal to speed up the adoption process and were reassured that the Council's system would remain very robust and thorough.
- Monitoring and Safeguarding Children and Young People in Education
- An update from NHS colleagues on the commissioning and provision of 0-19 Child Health Services and how these services meet the requirements under the Healthy Child Programme.
- The draft Autism Strategy
- Outcome reports from Ofsted Inspections on Safeguarding, Looked after Children, Children's Centres, Adoption and Fostering Services and the inspections of our Children's Residential Homes. Post inspection progress reports provide us with an opportunity to question officers on the actions taken to fulfil the recommendations listed.
- Alternative provision and enhanced support for children educated outside mainstream school including details on service provision and the challenges being faced by the service.
- The Chairman of the Looked after Children-Members Group presented his annual report and stressed the importance of raising the awareness of all County Councillors to their responsibility as a corporate parent.

I would like to thank former County Councillor Keith Barnes for his chairmanship of the Committee and hope that I can continue to provide the leadership for the Committee that allows Members to challenge the Children & Young Peoples Service and the Executive to continue to deliver exemplary services.

County Councillor Elizabeth Shields
Chairman Young People O&SC



Scrutiny of Health

Scope:

To review any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of health services in the County with the aim of improving the health of local people and ensuring that their needs are considered as an integral part of the delivery and development of healthcare services.

To focus on action to achieve health improvement; to examine health care in the context of the wider determinants of health; to examine how health services address the needs of local communities; especially to address health inequalities; to ensure that local health and health related issues are being tackled jointly and in a co-ordinated way across agencies.

To contribute to the NHS's Quality Accounts initiative by providing commentaries to the NHS Trusts serving North Yorkshire on how they intend to improve the quality of the services they provide.

Over the last year the Committee has been involved in a wide range of local issues and has participated in scrutiny at a regional level. The Committee also has to be mindful of developments at a national level. The next few paragraphs will give a flavour of the Committee's work and what it has achieved over the year.

Our work on the proposed withdrawal of consultant-led maternity and children's services at the Friarage Hospital in Northallerton culminated in us referring the proposed changes to the Secretary of State for Health. It was disappointing that Secretary of State for Health did not ask the Independent Reconfiguration Panel (IRP) to carry out a full review and it will be against this background that the Hambleton, Richmondshire and Whitby Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) will shortly be launching a consultation. We will be endeavouring to make sure the CCG addresses the comments from the IRP, in particular that the consultation draft document could usefully be adapted to satisfy all requirements, that there should be a clear explanation of the case for change and that the whole consultation process is open and transparent.

At a regional level the Committee has participated in the national review of Children's Cardiac Surgery. Under the original proposals the children's cardiac unit in Leeds was to close. Following widespread opposition across the Yorkshire and Humber region the matter was referred to the Secretary of State by the Yorkshire and Humber Joint Scrutiny of Health Committee. The Secretary of State announced on 12 June that he was suspending the whole process. He has now given NHS England the task of coming forward, by the end of July 2013, with a plan on how to take children's cardiac surgery forward alongside developments which may be needed in respect of adult's cardiac surgery. I have represented North Yorkshire on the Joint Scrutiny Committee since its formation in 2011 and throughout that time I have championed North Yorkshire's view that the children's units at both Leeds and Newcastle should remain open. We will have to see what comes out from the work of NHS England but I feel there is more of a commitment across the NHS to look seriously at the need to retain both units to cover the north of England. The fact that children's and adults cardiac surgery may be looked at together will help.

The report of the public enquiry chaired by Robert Francis QC into the Mid-Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust is having far reaching impact on everyone involved in healthcare – commissioners, providers, regulators and scrutineers. Locally, we must never “take our eye off the ball” in seeking to ensure that all people across the county receive the standard of care we would all like to receive ourselves.

County Councillor Jim Clark
Chairman Scrutiny of Health Committee



Corporate and Partnerships

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.

As Councillor Casling has highlighted in her introduction the County Council has difficult budget decisions to be made in the coming years. It is now natural not only to ask what can we do better but what can we do better and also cost us less! The One Council programme has been instrumental in taking this thinking forward whilst also looking to encourage cross Directorate working. Although the formality of the one council programme is reaching its end the principles will continue and will be encompassed within the day to day work of the Committee.

In 2011 the Committee did an in-depth review looking at the ingredients required for community groups to run and manage services locally. Big Society might not be mentioned as often these days in the media. But as we have found as part of the One Council programme, budget savings mean that customers will have a bigger say in the way our services are delivered. This could range from local commissioning of services through to community run services. The changes to the library service already set a good precedent here. It will be interesting to see how this agenda develops in the future and how the Council approaches this.

From discussions at the January Committee meeting it's likely that the current community safety structures in the county will be unsustainable in future financial years. Whatever form the new structures take, the Committee will continue to hold to account the work of the 'Responsible Authorities' regarding their partnership work at county level. Furthermore the sign up to a joint protocol between Overview and Scrutiny and the Police and Crime Panel has laid the foundations for the Panel and the Committee to work together on issues of common interest where appropriate.

I look forward to not only Chairing the Committee but also having the opportunity to challenge the County Council to look at new ways of doing things so we can future proof our services and our workforce.

I thank County Councillor Casling for laying the foundations of Committee work so that we can look to an even stronger County Council built on constructive critical challenge.

County Councillor Tim Swales
Chairman, Corporate and Partnerships O&SC



Transport, Economy & Environment

Scope

Transport and communications infrastructure of all kinds, however owned or provided, and how the transport needs of the community are met.

Supporting business, economic regeneration and development and helping people develop their skills, including lifelong learning.

Sustainability, climate change strategy, countryside management, waste management, environmental conservation and enhancement, and cultural issues.

Flood and coastal erosion risk management

As I look back over the work the Committee has undertaken not just in this year but over the last 4 years I cannot believe what a diverse range of matters the Committee has scrutinised.

Not only have we kept a watching brief on the development of broadband across the County but we have questioned the Corporate Director of Business and Environmental Services and our Executive Members on the budget savings that have to be met. We have passed our views to the Executive on the siting of commercial wind turbines in close proximity to residential properties, Unsurfaced Unclassified roads, Public Rights of Way, the Flooding Strategy and the De-criminalisation of Parking to name just a few topics!

In 2012 a Task Group of Committee members undertook an in depth scrutiny review looking at the use of temporary vehicle activated signs. We sought out the views of Parish Councils, the police and fire and rescue service in order to identify a way forward. What we don't want to see is a proliferation of road signs cluttering up the highways and reducing the effect on the motorist. We recommended a pilot scheme and were thrilled when the Executive agreed. We look forward to hearing back from officers and the Parishes taking part in due course.

Climate change and biodiversity have not escaped our scrutiny and just as His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales recently said we should '*work in harmony with nature*' for the benefit of future generations and it is with this important message in mind that we are keen to support and encourage North Yorkshire schools to plant bee friendly flowers. You may ask what importance are the dwindling numbers of bees in our County. Well bees pollinate a third of everything we eat in the UK!!

From bees to the Highways AgencyI did say our workload was diverse!! In August 2012 the Committee welcomed the opportunity to engage with the Highways Agency and yet again stress the importance of the A64 as a main arterial route to the east coast. A route that we are disappointed to say will not be made into a dual carriageway but one that the Highways Agency have committed to working closely with the County Council on to improve where we can. This was not a one off meeting but the start of regular dialogue between the Committee and the Highways Agency.

And finally I will take this opportunity to encourage new County Councillors to get involved in scrutiny work. Overview and Scrutiny not only provides an avenue to put forward the views of the citizens of North Yorkshire on matters that are important to them, it acts as a check and balance for the County Council Executive and helps you, as a County Councillor, to learn so much about the services the County Council provides.

County Councillor David Jeffels
Chairman Transport Economy & Environment O&SC



Looking Ahead

This report has highlighted some of the work undertaken by each of the Committees over the last year. There are three new Chairmen for the Committees and I am sure they will each bring their own experience and knowledge in helping the Committees to form their future work programmes as well as taking on board work put forward by the previous Committee.

Some of the main areas of work currently identified in the work programmes for the coming year are listed in the table below.

O&S Committee	Area of work
Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The problem of financial abuse against vulnerable adults • Fair Access to Care • Dementia Care Navigators
Corporate & Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NYCC workforce of the future • Engaging and communicating in the modern world • Considering the future plans of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable for North Yorkshire
Scrutiny of Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of health and social care • Access to primary care – including impact of the Minimum Practice Income Guarantee • Public Health • Urgent care in a large rural area – covering GP Out of Hours service, A&E + Minor Injuries Units, role of the ambulance service, NHS 111 • Children's and Maternity Services, Friarage Hospital • National review of Children's and Adults Cardiac surgery
Transport, Economy & Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tour de France • Work of the York and North Yorkshire & East Riding Partnership including the Growth Strategy • Passenger and Community Transport in North Yorkshire
Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact of welfare reform and possible links to child poverty • The Children and Families Bill – Developments in Special Educational Needs • E –Safety (online safety for children and young people)

As you can see Overview and Scrutiny takes a broad look, not just across the County Council, but across our partners as well!

If you would like to know more about how Overview and Scrutiny works in North Yorkshire County Council a handy guide is published on our website at www.northyorks.gov.uk or contact the Scrutiny Team Leader Bryon Hunter bryon.hunter@northyorks.gov.uk, Tel. 01609/532898

I hope you have found this Overview and Scrutiny Annual report both useful and interesting.

Thank you.

County Councillor Liz Casling