

**North Yorkshire County Council  
15 February 2017**

**Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Chairman's Statement**

1. My statement for this full Council summarises the main topics considered at our Committee meetings on 15 November 2016 and 16 January 2017.

**Reconfiguration of Library services**

2. The meeting of the Committee on 15 November 2016 was devoted to the scrutiny of the progress that had been made with the reconfiguration of library services in the county. This was the culmination of 12 months of in-depth scrutiny by the Committee.
3. We heard that the Library Service and the Stronger Communities Team had developed and implemented a programme of intervention and support to enable communities to take on a greater role in the delivery of library services in their area. Also, that both had developed strong working relations with volunteers and community groups, which enabled the effective and early resolution of problems that would otherwise have jeopardised the transfer of library services.
4. The Committee made a recommendation to Executive supporting the libraries reconfiguration programme but also detailing a number of areas in which reassurances were sought. These included: a commitment to maintain support to libraries to enable them to recruit and retain volunteers; and a commitment to intervene and provide support, should a library experience difficulties in the running of its services.
5. The Committee will continue to scrutinise this important area of work over the next 12 months, seeking progress reports as the newly configured libraries commence their first year of operation.

**Insurance tender and insurance claims analysis report**

6. On 16 January 2017, we received an update on the outcome of the 2016 insurance tender and an overview analysis of the Council's insurance claims experience over recent years.
7. We were pleased to see that the re-procurement exercise had resulted in significant savings to the Council of over £100,000. However, it was noted that much of these savings will not be realised due to increases in Insurance Premium Tax.

8. The Committee also noted that the analysis of the Council's insurance claims experience demonstrated that there remains a strong focus upon the identification and management of risks and insurance exposure to help reduce the number of claims made. Also, that there remained a robust approach to the management of claims, with a commitment to maintain a 'vigorous defence of any claim where it is thought that NYCC are not liable'.

### **2020 Customer and digital self-service**

9. At the Committee meeting on 16 January 2017, we also had an update on the progress that was being made against the 2020 target to have 70% of all contacts with customers being made through digital self-service channels.
10. We heard that the approach taken to increasing digital self-service had been developed with customers and that the Customer Strategy had been widely consulted upon. Also, that a balance was struck between maintaining a sharp focus on enabling self-service and the achievement of the associated financial savings, with the need to ensure a good customer experience and high levels of satisfaction.
11. The Committee also learned that there was a strong tie in with the work that was being undertaken on the reconfiguration of library services. Members will be aware that libraries are uniquely placed to provide access to IT equipment and support in using it.
11. The Committee was supportive of the programme of work that was underway and appreciated the need to promote self-service across all the aspects of the Council's work. We noted, however, that there was still a need to maintain some telephony and 'face to face' facilities so that people who were unable to use digital self-service could still access the information, advice and services they needed.

### **Committee work programme**

12. The work programme for the Committee has been drafted for the next 12 months. Following the extended scrutiny of the reconfiguration of library services, the Committee will now focus upon the work that is underway to achieve the 2020 North Yorkshire Programme savings and also the work of those agencies, organisations and partnerships that promote community safety in the county.

**County Councillor Derek Bastiman**  
**Chairman - Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee**  
County Hall, Northallerton

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