



**North Yorkshire**  
County Council

# **Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report**

**A review of the work of overview and  
scrutiny in 2016/17 and looking ahead to  
work that will be done in 2017/18**

**Cllr Jim Clark, acting Chairman of the NYCC  
Scrutiny Board and Daniel Harry, Scrutiny Team  
Leader**



**2016/17**

# Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2016/17

## Foreword by Cllr Jim Clark - acting Chairman of Scrutiny Board

As the acting Chairman of the Scrutiny Board, I am pleased to be able to introduce the 2016/17 Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report. This report provides a summary of and insight into the work has been done over the past year and what work will be done over the next 12 months. It also offers an opportunity to reflect on overview and scrutiny practice and ensure that the highest standards are maintained.



The overview and scrutiny committees have been busy this year working on a broad range of issues affecting the Council, its services and local people. Whilst the bulk of this work has been planned for some time, an increasing amount has, quite rightly, been reactive as services in the county undergo a period of change and uncertainty.

The Members of the overview and scrutiny committees and officers supporting them have worked hard to create a culture where transparency, involvement and accountability are welcomed and where challenge is seen as a vital and positive part of improving outcomes. It remains essential that overview and scrutiny continues to contribute positively to supporting the delivery of the Council's priorities through its critical friend role.

To finish, I would like to thank all those Members, co-opted committee members, officers and partners that have engaged in and contributed to Overview and Scrutiny over the past 12 months.

I commend the report to Council.

## **What is Overview and Scrutiny?**

The Local Government Act 2000 first introduced the requirement for every local authority to include provision for at least one overview and scrutiny committee.

The overview and scrutiny function is a key element of the County Council's governance arrangements and decision making process.

Although not a decision-making body, Overview and Scrutiny is at its most effective when it grasps the potential to influence and inform decisions made by both the Council and partner bodies affecting the County.

## **What does it aim to do?**

Scrutiny aims to contribute to the Council's corporate outcomes in many ways, including:

- Enabling Councillors to become directly involved in the development of: policy and strategy; consultation and public engagement planning; and the performance management of the Council
- Keeping Councillors and the public informed of key issues, priorities and initiatives
- Enabling direct engagement with the people of North Yorkshire
- Acting as a critical friend and providing Cabinet Members and senior officers with a non-partisan forum in which to test out ideas, approaches and gain feedback and suggestions
- Providing a structure, through the call-in process, for scrutinising specific decisions of the Executive
- Scrutinising issues of public concern beyond the remit of the Council.

## **What does it done over the past year?**

The five thematic overview and scrutiny committees have looked at and responded to a wide range of issues. The key ones are outlined below:

### **Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Focusing in the last 12 months on:

- Reconfiguration of the Library Service and the transition to community libraries
- Re-procurement of insurances and analysis of the insurance claims history
- Progress against the 2020 target of 70% of contact being managed by customers using digital self-service channels
- New ways of working and the roll out of new IT equipment and software
- Effective data sharing and how this can reduce administrative overheads
- Community safety and the work of the Police and Crime Commissioner, the National Probation Service and the Tobacco Control Alliance.

### **Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Focusing in the last 12 months on:

- Framework Domiciliary Care Contracts
- Extra Care Provision
- Mental Capacity and Deprivation of Living Standards
- Dementia - commissioning and service delivery of Dementia Navigators
- Stronger Communities and Living Well
- Discharges for Hospital and the response of NYCC Health and Adult Services
- Supported Employment - activity and rationale for retention of in-house service
- Equipment Services - procurement.

### **Young Peoples Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Focusing in the last 12 months on:

- Closing the Gap
- Review of Youth Justice
- Voice, Influence and Participation
- The prevention delivery model - impact of the changes and the effect on outcomes to include the long term financial savings
- Careers Advice and Guidance
- Growing up in North Yorkshire - implications for planning and service delivery.

### **Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Focusing in the last 12 months on:

- Minerals and Waste Joint Plan for North Yorkshire, York and the North York Moors National Park – informing the evidence with regards to Hydraulic Fracturing (Fracking)
- Local Flood Risk Management Strategy – implementation review
- York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership – review of annual report and progress against key milestones and performance measures
- Review of the Highways Maintenance Contract
- Public Rights of Way – overview of the operational review
- Rail developments - update report on the rail franchise, Rail North and Transport for the North
- Civil Parking Enforcement - overview
- The rural economy and agriculture – analysis of the potential impact of Brexit
- Apprenticeships – oversight of the preparations for responding to the new apprenticeship levy to be introduced from April 2017.

### **Scrutiny of Health Committee**

Focusing in the last 12 months on:

- The development and implementation of the NHS England Sustainability and Transformation Plans
- Changes to Government funding for community pharmacies
- Access to health services in rural areas
- Mental health service provision across the county
- Suicide prevention
- The closure of the Lambert Community Hospital in Thirsk
- End of life care provision
- Monitoring the potential human health impacts of hydraulic fracking.

## **In-depth reviews**

Extended pieces of overview and scrutiny can be undertaken, where a more in-depth analysis of the issues is required. Over the past 12 months, a number of these have been undertaken, including work on 'hydraulic fracking' and 'end of life care provision'.

### **Hydraulic Fracking**

A Joint Sub-Committee of the Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Scrutiny of Health Committee was held on 22 and 23 January 2016 to hear evidence from a range of organisations, groups, members of the public; professional bodies and Government Departments, including: Friends of the Earth; UK Onshore Oil and Gas; Department of Energy and Climate Change; Oil and Gas Authority; Environment Agency; Public Health England; Health and Safety Executive; and Yorkshire Water. The outcome was a series of amendments to the Minerals and Waste Joint Plan to reflect evidence heard about the spatial policy criteria, cumulative impact, provision of funds to pay for any environmental contamination arising from shale gas operations, independent environmental baseline monitoring and waste water management.

The work of the Sub-Committee was recognised by all parties to have been balanced, inclusive and measured in its approach, with the arising recommendations gaining widespread support.

The details of the Joint Sub-Committee of the Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Scrutiny of Health Committee meeting can be found here -

<http://democracy.northyorks.gov.uk/committees.aspx?commid=95&meetid=3404>

### **End of life care**

This piece of extended scrutiny work was led by the North Yorkshire Scrutiny of Health Committee. The aim was to engage with a broad range of commissioners, service providers, patients and the public to better understand the current provision of end of life care in North Yorkshire and identify any areas where recommendations for improvements could be made.

The approach taken was one of extended scrutiny over a 6 month period. This included: desktop research into national guidance, policy and best practice; written reports and presentations to the full committee; expert witnesses; visits to hospices; consultation/focus group discussions with stakeholders, carers and patients.

The key findings included:

- The majority of people, about 75%, experience good quality end of life care, whether that is at home, in a care home or in a hospital. However, 25% do not
- Whilst most people state that the preferred place of death is their own home, most people, 43%, die in hospital
- Hospital costs were by far the largest cost elements of end-of-life care. These averaged over £4,500 per person for those who died, during the final 90 days of their lives. The bulk of this cost was due to emergency hospital admissions

- There are big differences across the county as to what type of end of life care people are able to access and what choices they have
- There is a lot of good work underway across the county with people at an operational level co-ordinating care as best they can and through good will, despite the lack of a coherent plan and strategy and limited funding
- There is no new money to support changes and so we are looking at enhanced co-ordination, sharing best practice and adopting approaches that can save money.

There were 9 recommendations in all. The principal recommendation was that a multi-agency forum be established for commissioners and providers of end of life care in the county.

The report was formally signed off at the Scrutiny of Health Mid Cycle Briefing on 3 March 2017 and then submitted to the North Yorkshire Health and Wellbeing Board at their meeting of 17 March 2017. It is available here -

<http://democracy.northyorks.gov.uk/committees.aspx?commid=27&meetid=3392>

## **Other approaches**

Overview and scrutiny committees also give detailed consideration to a review of service activity over a number of meetings, using a mixture of methods, without having to embark on what is generally understood to be an in-depth review.

The Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee, for example, compared the feedback from a series of conversations with providers and organisations that provide social care and public health services with directorate information on service performance and activity. The Committee, in its capacity as critical friend, then advised the Portfolio Holder of its positive assessment of the directorate's commissioning procedures and practices.

Two overview and scrutiny committees, Young Peoples and Care and Independence, found it useful to group topics together under a small number of key themes. The Young Peoples Overview and Scrutiny Committee examined over a period of time, largely at formal meeting level, how educational outcomes for our most disadvantaged pupils are being improved. The findings from this work, when combined with other topics - for example the review of Careers Advice, will contribute to the committee reaching conclusions on the higher level theme of 'School Improvement in a Changing Landscape'.

## **Priorities for 2017/18**

Each overview and scrutiny committee has a work programme in place that looks 12 months ahead. This work programme is built upon a range of data, information and analysis, including: performance data; inspection reports; national research and policy; consultations and public engagement events; the County Council Plan; and local issues raised by elected members, members of the public or highlighted in the media.

Some of the themes for overview and scrutiny in 2017/18 are summarised below:

- 2020 programme, implementation of service changes and attainment of budget savings
- Establishment of Traded Services and commercial partnership arrangements
- Implementation of the NHS England Sustainability and Transformation Partnership plans locally
- Reduction in inequalities across the county, with a focus upon attainment, health and income
- Integration of health and social care, planning and delivery
- Workforce shortages across health, social care and the wider economy in North Yorkshire
- Community safety and the effectiveness of work underway to reduce crime, fear of crime and reoffending
- Assessing the potential impact of Article 50 and the UK exit from the European Union
- Exclusions from School – how pupils and parents are supported; what can be done to reduce the rate of pupil exclusions
- Safeguarding - how do we ensure the safety of Children and Young People in North Yorkshire.

The work programmes will be reviewed by overview and scrutiny committees at their first formal meeting following the Local Government Elections on 4 May 2017.

## **Areas for improvement in 2017/18**

The Scrutiny Board has led discussions about scrutiny best practise this year. Areas for future improvement in scrutiny practice at the Council have been identified for 2017/18, as follows:

**Public** - more public engagement in meetings and greater public awareness of the outcome of overview and scrutiny work

**Outcomes** – a greater focus on identifying what the hoped for outcome is for each piece of overview and scrutiny work that is undertaken, with a strong emphasis upon adding value

**Forward planning** – co-ordination of work programmes and use of joint scrutiny to tackle cross cutting issues, such as workforce shortages or integration of health and social care

**Performance management** – investigation of strategic performance issues to see whether there is a need for overview and scrutiny to pursue particular lines of enquiry

**Service users** – making it easier for service users to express their views at overview and scrutiny and to contribute to work that is undertaken

## **How to find out more about Overview and Scrutiny**

Further information on Overview and Scrutiny is available on the North Yorkshire County Council website - <http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/article/23665/Scrutiny>

Or contact the Scrutiny Team Leader Daniel Harry  
E: [daniel.harry@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:daniel.harry@northyorks.gov.uk) or T: 01609 533531.

Members of the public are welcome to attend any meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Committee papers are available from the North Yorkshire County Council website as follows - <http://democracy.northyorks.gov.uk/>