

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
13 November 2019
SCRUTINY BOARD – STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

Members will be aware that Scrutiny Board brings together the Chairs of the five thematic overview and scrutiny committees at the Council and the Older Peoples' and Young People's Champions. It provides an opportunity for a whole council view of scrutiny activity, which avoids gaps and overlaps and helps establish a lead committee for areas of joint interest. It also provides a forum in which the key performance issues for the Council can be reviewed and items for further scrutiny identified.

The last meeting of Scrutiny Board was on 9 August 2019. At that meeting the following matters relating to the delivery of overview and scrutiny at the Council were discussed:

- The work of the joint sub-committee of the five thematic overview and scrutiny committees, that has been established to scrutinise the Council's approach to reducing net Carbon Dioxide emissions and meeting the 2030 carbon neutral target
- Public Health and which committees are best placed to scrutinise commissioning and provider activity.

Members of Scrutiny Board attended the Executive Q1 Performance Management meeting on 13 August 2019, to raise questions regarding key areas of the Council's performance under the heading of Growth. This included clarifying:

- The action was being taken across the public sector to ensure that housing growth is accompanied by a commensurate growth in key services and infrastructure.
- Whether we can do more as a Council to engage Highways England and the government in a discussion about the county's strategic road network.
- What further action can be taken to ensure that all areas of the county have good broadband coverage, rather than only those deemed commercially viable by suppliers.
- The position regarding the proposed merger of Local Enterprise Partnerships and seeking assurances that the economic priorities of North Yorkshire, as a largely rural and sparsely populated county, are not lost in any joint work that is done with West Yorkshire.

Members of Scrutiny Board also raised a number of issues with the Executive relating to education and social care, including:

- Whether the frequent changes to the OFSTED inspection regime and the increased length of time between inspections (up to 6 years) means that it is now more difficult to track school performance over time.
- The processes that are in place to ensure that home education meets the standards required.
- What more can be done to reduce the number of long term placements for adults that are above approved rates.

The next meeting of Scrutiny Board is on 22 November 2019. At that meeting, will be using an assurance framework, developed by the Centre for Public Scrutiny, to

undertake an initial review of overview and scrutiny practice. The outcome of which may lead to some changes in how we deliver the scrutiny function at the Council. The last self-assessment was completed in 2016. Since then new government guidance on overview and scrutiny has been issued. There have also been significant changes to the Chairmanship of the overview and scrutiny committees, including myself as the new Chair of Scrutiny Board.

Members will be aware that scrutiny was created to act as a check and balance on the executive and is a statutory requirement for all authorities operating executive arrangements.

Chairman of Scrutiny Board
County Councillor Derek Bastiman
4 November 2019.