

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**19 February 2020**

**STATEMENT OF THE CORPORATE & PARTNERSHIPS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN**

Since my last statement to Council, the Corporate and Partnership Overview and Scrutiny Committee has held one formal meeting in December 2019.

At the meeting the Committee received a presentation on the use of the customer portal and we were pleased to note the ongoing work to both encourage a channel shift to online services and to examine and address reasons why some residents are still choosing to contact Customer Services by telephone. We were reassured that a telephone service will always be provided for those who do not want to or are unable to access online services for whatever reason. We also discussed ways of promoting a new online Registrar facility and made a number of suggestions about promoting the new service through Hospitals, Funeral Directors, Doctors Surgeries, Solicitors and Care Homes.

In addition, the Committee received an update on progress with the delivery of the County Council's alternative investment framework, which highlighted the categories under which opportunities for investment fall, the limit set on the sums for investment, and the targets set on returns so that appropriate assessment of the risks and rewards can take place.

We were made aware of the ongoing work to identify an appropriate tenant for the County Council's vacant unit at Harrogate Royal Baths, and the work underway to understand the potential for investment in a solar farm. As it fits with the County Council's commitment to reducing its carbon footprint, we agreed the opportunity for a solar farm should not be missed and we will be receiving an update on this in due course.

In regard to housing loans, we questioned what more could be done to encourage Social Landlords to take up available funding, and we were surprised to learn that as Housing Associations were awash with funding, they are not interested in the scale of funding the County Council is able to offer. We also queried whether the loans to NYCC companies were delivering the right returns and were pleased to note the agreed high level decision framework was being applied in every case.

At the same meeting, the Committee received updates on the Community Safety Partnership's work on its first Domestic Homicide Review, and on NYCC Property Services' approach to rationalisation.

In regard to the lessons learnt from the Domestic Homicide Review we were pleased to note the multi-agency approach, and the excellent working relationship between the relevant agencies, practitioners and professionals across North Yorkshire and beyond its boundaries. We also noted a number of themes coming out of the national data on intimate partner homicides and the links to mental health.

In regard to property rationalisation, we were pleased to note a new asset management system was in place, and that a county wide plan and asset register were in development. The Committee will be receiving six-monthly updates on this going forward.

Finally, the Committee assessed the governance arrangements for the Brierley Group and were reassured that appropriate robust measures were in place. Members of the Committee have been issued an open invitation to attend future meetings of the Shareholder Committee and we will receive a further update on this in 12 months' time.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR DEREK BASTIMAN