

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

22 July 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 March 2020. The subsequent meeting that was scheduled for early June was cancelled due to the COVID-19 lockdown, but work is underway in preparation for our next formal meeting in September 2020 which will be held remotely.

At our March meeting the Committee received a presentation from North Yorkshire's Police Fire & Crime Commissioner which provided an overview of the work undertaken since the transition of governance of North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service, and also presented the Commissioner's 'One Year On' report detailing progress against her Local Business Case. Overall it was a positive update and the Committee passed on its thanks for the significant contribution of the Fire Service during the time of the Floods, as part of the Fire & Rescue role. We did however express our concern at the poor long term budget situation for the Fire Service, in sharp contrast to that of North Yorkshire Police.

At the same meeting, we received an update on the resettlement of people in North Yorkshire under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) and under the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme. Approximately 200 new refugees are to be resettled across North Yorkshire between 2020 and 2024, and we were therefore pleased to note that the County would continue to receive support from the Refugee Council throughout that time, alongside receiving similar levels of funding. We sought confirmation that careful consideration would be given to the country and cultural background of the refugees to be settled under the new Scheme, recognising it was a deciding factor in how successful each resettlement would be.

We also received an update on the County Council's changing workforce, a detailed progress update on the implementation of the Workforce Plan and an overview of some key priorities for the year ahead. Noting the many ways in which the organisation was engaging with its workforce and providing opportunities for learning and development, the Committee were pleased to discover that some online learning resources would be made available to Members and we suggested that training be provided on Mental Health issues and on dealing with people with Dementia. As it was confirmed that the number of apprenticeships being offered by the County Council had not been affected by the introduction of the apprenticeship levy scheme, the Committee also suggested that opportunities associated with Autism Plus be explored.

In regard to the County Council's Corporate Risk Register, we considered the new risks, deleted risks and those risks that had significantly changed. We noted the higher ranking now given to Information Governance Risk and the many links between the Directorate Risk Registers and the Corporate Risk Register.

In regard to the County Council's motor and liability insurance claims, we noted that all Council owned vehicles now had dashcams fitted which was proving a helpful factor in keeping the number of commercial motor fleet claims relatively steady. We also noted the varying levels of public liability across Directorates, in particular the decreasing number of those claims for BES.

However, we did suggest that the cost of defending pothole claims could be better spent carrying out repairs, thereby reducing the possibility of claims.

Finally, the Committee was updated on the creation of an online tool for members. A prototype has been developed and at the time of our meeting work was underway to consider GDPR implications and legal compliance. A number of the Committee agreed to participate in some internal testing over the summer, with the intention of rolling out the new online tool before the end of the calendar year. This has been delayed due to the lockdown but members are keen to progress this as soon as possible.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR DEREK BASTIMAN