

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

16 November 2022

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN OF SCRUTINY BOARD

Scrutiny Board brings together the Chairs of the six 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 scrutiny function was created to act as a check on and balance to the executive and it is a statutory requirement for all authorities operating executive arrangements.

There has been one meeting of Scrutiny Board since my last statement to Council.

The meeting of Scrutiny Board on 19 August 2022 focussed upon the scrutiny of the Q1 Performance and Finance Management Report, ahead of the members of the Board attending the meeting of the Executive on 23 August 2022. Some of the issues raised at the Executive meeting by members of the Scrutiny Board are highlighted below:

- NHS Health Checks and the crucial role that they have to play in the promotion of good health, prevention and early intervention
- NYLAF, the Household Support Fund and the Warm and Well programme all provide support to people on low incomes. Questions were raised about what more could be done to provide support to people in need during the cost of living crisis.
- The level of staff turnover and what was being done to manage it during a period of uncertainty for many employees
- Recycling and whether more can be done to encourage and enable greater reuse, recycling and composting
- The minimum broadband speed needed to enable people (leisure activities or work/business) to do what they need to do and how widely these speeds are currently available across the county
- Concerns were raised about a potential increase in demand for health and social care services in the autumn and winter as the cost of living crisis impacts upon people's health and wellbeing
- Queries whether the demand for Free School Meals is likely to increase as a result of the cost of living crisis and what happens to those children and families who fall just below the eligibility criteria but still have high levels of need.

The Older People's and Young People's Champions provided an update of key aspects of their work over the past three months. A common theme was concerning the cost of living crisis and how this could impact upon the long term health and wellbeing of older people and young families.

County Councillor Malcolm Taylor, Chair of the Transition (LGR) overview and scrutiny committee, provided a summary of the committee work programme. The County Council had agreed at its July meeting to constitute this overview and scrutiny committee for the period leading up to vesting day. The committee will meet four times and will focus upon some of the key issues relating to the implementation of the new unitary authority.

Scrutiny Board also considered the approach to the scrutiny of climate change and carbon reduction work being undertaken by the County Council and others. The lead overview and scrutiny committee for matters relating to climate change is the Transport, Economy and Environment committee. It was recognised, however, that this does not prevent the other committees looking into matters relating to climate change.

Members of Scrutiny Board are next due meet at 25 November 2022. At that meeting, the Executive Q2 Performance and Finance Management Report will be scrutinised.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR KARIN SEDGWICK
1 November 2022