

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

19 JULY 2023

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', Young People's and Climate Change 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 26 May 2023 focussed upon the scrutiny of the Executive Q4 Performance Monitoring Report, ahead of the members of the Board attending the meeting of the Executive at 11am on Tuesday 30 May 2023. Some of the issues raised at the Executive meeting by members of the Scrutiny Board are highlighted below:

- The increase in demand for support from children and young people's services and whether this is a legacy of the pandemic which has been exacerbated by recent increase in the cost of living
- Understanding how children and young people's services can continue to perform well during such an increase in demand for services and whether there is any good practice that could be applied elsewhere in the council
- The changes the behaviour of some children in school and the impact of the pandemic and a prolonged period outside formal, in-person teaching in 2020 and 2021
- Concerns about the apparent increase in the number of children and young people who are vaping and potential health risk posed by cheap and/or counterfeit vapes that may not meet national production and safety standards
- The impact of the cost of living crisis and the associated increases in gas and electricity, food and wages upon the average cost of a care home placement for someone aged 65+
- Understanding the impact upon reablement as capacity continues to be diverted to support domiciliary care
- Staffing shortages and particular concerns about local, regional and national shortages in planning officers and what this means for the longer term sustainability of the service
- The wide variation in the costs associated with the collection of council tax and what work is being done to reduce these costs and align practices over the different teams.

Members of Scrutiny Board also received an update on the work that is underway to support the Council's 6 Area Constituency Committees (ACCs) as they develop and embed their new ways of working. There is a need to ensure that local scrutiny is co-ordinated and that work undertaken by the ACCs complements that of the Council's six thematic overview and scrutiny committees.

The Older People's and Young People's Champions provided an update on key aspects of their work over the past three months. A common theme was the key role that the community and voluntary sector continue to play in supporting vulnerable people in the community and the added value that many of the networks and groups bring by enabling people to meet,

exchange ideas and views and access support. There was also a discussion about the working definition of an 'older person', being someone who was over 50 years or age, and whether this adequately reflected the different circumstances that people are in as the age.

The recently appointed Climate Change Champion attended Scrutiny Board for the first time on 26 May 2023 and expressed his interest in raising the profile of and interest in work to promote carbon reduction across the Council.

Members of Scrutiny Board are next due meet at 18 August 2023. At that meeting, the Executive Q1 Performance and Finance Management Report will be scrutinised.

COUNCILLOR KARIN SEDGWICK
26 June 2023