

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

17 February 2021

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN OF SCRUTINY BOARD

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.

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

The meeting of Scrutiny Board on 4 December 2020 focussed upon the scrutiny of the Q2 Performance and Finance Management Report, ahead of the members of the Board attending the Executive on 8 December 2020. Some of the issues raised at the Executive meeting by members of the Scrutiny Board are highlighted below:

- A reduction was evident in the number of contacts with adult social care services. This then may mean that there are higher and more complex levels of need once people begin to re-engage with adult social care services post pandemic.
- Interest in understanding what lessons have been learned from the management of covid-19 in care homes during the first wave of the pandemic and how these were then applied during the second and third waves.
- Whether any of the new ways of working that have been adopted in social care as a response to the pandemic are likely to be mainstreamed post-pandemic.
- A question as to how what support has been put in place for children with special educational needs, particularly those with autism. It has previously been reported in the national media that a significant number of autistic children struggled with school closures during the first lockdown and have since struggled to re-engage in mainstream school settings.
- The large-scale move of office-based staff to home working since the first lockdown in March 2020 has raised a question as to whether there is a need to review the current use of NYCC properties and office space.
- The long-term impact of the pandemic upon the use of public transport and the sustainability of the current provision of bus services by private companies.
- Whether some parts of the local economy can be stimulated to grow to compensate for the contraction of other parts of the economy. In doing so, overall employment and income levels could be maintained or even grown.
- The long-term plan for the Community Support Organisations, which have proved to be so effective in supporting vulnerable people in the community during the pandemic.

At the meeting of the Scrutiny Board on 4 December 2020, members also discussed how a programme of in-depth scrutiny across all five thematic overview and scrutiny committees could be implemented that reviewed the response to the pandemic and how it has changed the way in which the Council and other organisations work. In doing so, there was recognition that the Council and other organisations were responding to a third wave in the pandemic and so it was important that any scrutiny was both targeted and proportionate.

Members of Scrutiny Board are next due meet on 4 March 2021. At that meeting, the Executive Q3 Performance and Finance Management Report will be scrutinised. Further consideration will also be given to the scrutiny of the final report of the Rural Commission and the recommendations therein.

Members will be aware that scrutiny 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.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR DEREK BASTIMAN
Chairman of Scrutiny Board
2 February 2021