

## **NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL**

**24 JULY 2024**

### **STATEMENT OF THE CHAIR OF THE HOUSING & LEISURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

This is the first statement from the new Housing & Leisure Overview & Scrutiny Committee which has met once since the last meeting of full Council, on 10 June 2024, at which the Committee received introductory presentations on both areas of its remit.

In regard to housing, the Committee recognised the new regime is a huge shift for local authorities, and that alongside ensuring it meets the appropriate standards with its own housing stock, the Authority also has a legal responsibility to enforce housing standards within the private sector.

The Committee went on to consider:

- The findings from the recently completed Housing Review, recognising it provided a starting position for performance improvement in three key areas of compliance i.e. tenant satisfaction, the accounting position and complaints.
- A presentation on the HRA Policy Framework – the Committee welcomed the opportunity to assist in the future development of the required policies via a Task & Finish group and agreed they would like a future update on the findings from the planned consultation on the ASB Policy and Tenancy Policy.

The Committee also identified a number of other areas for consideration at future meetings e.g.:

- The findings from a review of the Homelessness Strategy
- Progress updates on the ongoing work towards compliance with the new Social Housing Regulations across the four key themes i.e. safety and quality; transparency, influence and accountability; neighbourhood and community; and tenancy
- Bi-annual updates on the delivery of the Housing Improvement Plan

In order to enable the scrutiny of housing related matters, the Committee are keen to develop their understanding and therefore agreed a training plan. The first training session was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> July provided by a representative from the office of the Regulator for Social Housing.

In regard to leisure (encompassing culture, leisure, archives and libraries), the Committee considered the key challenges and opportunities. They recognised the ongoing need to identify appropriate funding streams in order to maintain buildings and enable the delivery of activities, noting the current condition of some assets would make this quite challenging. They noted the planned asset condition surveys and recognised there may be future opportunities for asset disposal, perhaps to be run by town councils etc. They also agreed the need to maintain a balance between commercial and community use of buildings.

The Committee went on to consider the recommendations arising from the recent Strategic Leisure Review and noted the planned development of a new vision and service model built on three pillars i.e.: facilities; local delivery; and community infrastructure.

At its September meeting the Committee will be considering a draft Cultural Strategy for North Yorkshire as well as receiving an annual update on Library Services.

**COUNCILLOR MALCOLM TAYLOR**