

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

26 FEBRUARY 2025

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

The Housing & Leisure Overview & Scrutiny Committee scrutinises the Council's role and remit as a social landlord, including policy review; service improvement; and governance arrangements to help ensure compliance with provision and regulation of social housing. In addition, those housing services for which the Council is responsible, including housing strategy; homelessness and housing needs; the delivery of affordable housing as well as private sector housing renewal. It also scrutinises cultural issues and the Council's role as a provider of leisure services.

Since the Chair's last statement to Council in November 2024, the Committee has met once on 25 November 2024 to consider the following items of business:

- Housing Growth Update
- Strategic Leisure Review Update
- Draft Tenancy Policy
- Housing Complaints Handling Update
- Proposals For Scrutiny Review Task Group Work

The Executive Member for Culture, Arts & Housing attended the meeting to participate in the discussions around housing growth and the other housing related matters on the agenda, and on the ongoing Strategic Leisure Review.

As part of the Housing Growth Update, the Committee noted the range of delivery mechanisms for the 650 new homes planned, and the delivery of new homes on council owned land through the joint venture. The Committee noted the Housing Improvement Board would monitor delivery progress, and the milestones, and outcomes associated with the joint venture, and suggested it might benefit from having a seventh independent member to act as arbitrator.

The Strategic Leisure Review update provided feedback on the ongoing 'Let's Talk' consultation. The Committee recognised there were factors that were a barrier to people being active and was pleased to note the consultation feedback would be used to help deliver the strategy and develop services. In regard to how best to apply some pricing consistency for fitness/leisure centre fees, the Committee suggested that a tiered approach taking account of the variation in facilities may be a fair way forward. The Committee will continue to monitor the development of a pricing structure as the work progresses.

The Committee suggested the following needed addressing through the draft Tenancy Policy:

- The issue of single tenants living in multi-bedroomed properties - whilst noting the limited number of one-bedroomed properties for tenants to downsize to, Members suggested the introduction of incentives to encourage down-sizing alongside the promotion of the economic benefits.
- The upkeep of council house gardens.

In regard to the update on Housing Complaints Handling, the Committee noted the number of complaints received and their themes, and agreed to receive a dashboard summary on complaints data at every meeting, with a comprehensive report provided annually.

Finally, the Committee agreed to undertake four Task Group scrutiny reviews in 2025, looking at the following Standards/Policies:

- Lettable Standard (Void Standard)
- Grounds Maintenance Policy

- Housing Fees and Charges Policy
- Compensation Policy

The Committee next formal meeting is on 10 March 2025.

COUNCILLOR MALCOLM TAYLOR