

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

5 May 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.

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 4 March 2021 focussed upon the scrutiny of the Q3 Performance and Finance Management Report, ahead of the members of the Board attending the Executive on 9 March 2021. Some of the issues raised at the Executive meeting by members of the Scrutiny Board are highlighted below:

- The increase in elective home education during the pandemic and what role the Council has in supporting home education
- Whether the changes to the OFSTED programme of inspections over the past few years means that it is increasingly difficult to know how well some of our schools are performing
- The support that is being put in place for children with Education Health Care Plans
- What is being done to help reduce the backlog in criminal court cases in both the Youth Court and Crown Court, which have arisen due to the pandemic. It was noted that the delays in the administration of justice are detrimental to both the accused and their alleged victims and families.
- The difficulties that are being experienced across the county with access to NHS dentistry and in particular for Looked After Children
- The role that the Council has to play in supporting the community and voluntary sector in the long term, as many organisations have struggled financially and have been forced to use reserves in 2020/21
- How the Council and the Local Enterprise Partnership can work to support businesses, particularly Small and Medium Enterprises in adapting to trading in a post-covid and post-Brexit world.

At the meeting of the Scrutiny Board on 4 March 2021, members also discussed how to approach the scrutiny of the final report of the Rural Commission and the implementation of any actions or recommendations. The final report is due to be published in June 2021 and it is certain that there will be areas of interest for all of the Council's scrutiny committees.

Members of Scrutiny Board are next due meet on 21 May 2021. At that meeting, the Executive Q4 Performance and Finance Management Report will be scrutinised. Further consideration will also be given to: the progress being made with the scrutiny of the Council and local NHS response to and recovery from the pandemic; and the long term plans for holding committee meetings, whether that is in person or via remote access.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR DEREK BASTIMAN
Chairman of Scrutiny Board
14 April 2021