

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

18 MARCH 2026

STATEMENT OF THE CHAIR OF SCRUTINY BOARD

Scrutiny Board brings together the Chairs of the six thematic overview and scrutiny committees at the Council and the Older People's, 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.

This is my last statement as Chair of Scrutiny Board. I took on the role in May 2022 and have seen a number of positive changes to the way in which we conduct and deliver scrutiny over the past 4 years. This has included greater involvement in policy development in areas such as housing, closer working with the Area Committees and notable pieces of joint work being undertaken, more targeted pieces of in-depth scrutiny, enhanced scrutiny of Council performance, and a strong (scrutiny) focus upon service alignment and improvement as we became a unitary council. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of my fellow scrutiny chairs for their help and support over the past 4 years.

The meeting of Scrutiny Board on 16 February 2026 focussed upon the scrutiny of the Executive Q3 Performance and Finance Management Report, ahead of the members of the Board attending the meeting of the Executive on Tuesday 17 February 2026. Some of the issues highlighted by members of the Scrutiny Board at their meeting are as summarised below:

- The role that the Council has to play in reducing shop vacancy rates, particularly in Scarborough and Malton
- The work that housing teams do with private sector tenants who are at risk of eviction and so homelessness
- What more the Council and others can do to encourage recycling and so to reduce the amount of household residual waste collected at the kerbside
- The improved performance of MAST and the positive impact that this is having elsewhere in the social care system for children and young people
- The improvements being made with the stability of placements for children in care, albeit that there is further to go as a minority of children in care, around 13.2%, are experiencing 3 or more placements in 12 months, which can be hugely disruptive
- The role of the Healthy You Service and what more can be done help ensure that long term health problems are avoided or prevented at the earliest stage
- Obesity rates amongst 4/5 year olds, the factors driving this and what more can be done to address it and the arising long term social, economic and health impacts
- The improvements in the timeliness of EHC plans issued, what we have done that has led to these improvements and how can this learning be applied to elsewhere in the Council
- The rate of permanent exclusions from primary school and what is being done to support schools, where there are behavioural issues.

Updates were also provided by the Older People's Champion, Young People's Champion and Climate Change Champion on key elements of their work over the past 3 months, as summarised below:

- Engagement with North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Road Safety Partnership on the challenges that can be faced by older drivers (over 65 years of age)
- Attendance at a multi-agency Ageing Well event covering topics such as: transitions from military life to civilian life; frailty and how to prevent and delay its onset; enhanced care services for older people that supports independent living; and the development of the Hospital@Home, a virtual ward that should help relieve pressure upon hospital admissions
- The development of the York and North Yorkshire sustainable future strategy, which will be out for public consultation in the spring
- Innovations in farming and waste management/processing, including the use of insects like the black soldier fly to breakdown organic waste and produce fertiliser and other products
- Some concerns regarding the performance of mental health services for children and young people and the impact that this was having upon their long-term health and wellbeing
- Engagement with a range of services from across the Council regarding the work to support unaccompanied asylum seekers.

Members of Scrutiny Board reviewed the work programmes of the Area Committees, to help to ensure that opportunities for joint working and co-ordination of activity were identified.

Members of Scrutiny Board are next due to meet at 2pm on Friday 22 May 2026. At that meeting, the Executive Q4 Performance and Finance Management report will be scrutinised.

COUNCILLOR KARIN SEDGWICK
10 March 2026