

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

21 July 2021

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services)

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To bring to the attention of the County Council the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21 is provided at Appendix 1, on behalf of the Chair of Scrutiny Board, Councillor Derek Bastiman, and the Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager, Daniel Harry.
- 2.2 The report highlights key activity by the council's Overview and Scrutiny function over the period from May 2020 to the beginning of April 2021 in its role of holding the Executive to account and ensuring that value is added to the Council's ongoing work to improve outcomes for customers and communities.
- 2.3 Clearly, the Covid-19 pandemic impacted upon the ability of scrutiny committees to meet formally at the beginning of this reporting period and this is reflected in the report. However, the report also highlights that each committee was able to adapt its approach to maintaining a level of overview of the work of each directorate – with support from senior officers – through the use of more informal remote gatherings with committee members and senior officers. Following the commencement of live broadcasted meetings for all committees around September 2020, committee meetings have been held in public. The areas of work undertaken or reviewed by each committee in the report is therefore reflective of both the informal and formal meetings convened across the financial year.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The financial implications are set out in the appended annual report.

4.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The legal implications are set out in the appended annual report.

5.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The climate change implications are set out in the appended annual report.

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The chairs of the Council's five thematic overview and scrutiny committees have been consulted on this annual report.

7.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The annual report on overview and scrutiny at the Council is a review of work done in the previous year and an outline of work to be done in the forthcoming year. It is not

a report that requires a decision. The report is taken to the July meeting of the County Council to keep all members and the public informed of the role of the Council's scrutiny function.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 County Council is asked to note the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2020/21.

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DP – July 2021



Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report

Cllr Derek Bastiman, Chairman of the NYCC Scrutiny Board and Daniel Harry, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager



2020/21

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21

Foreword by County Councillor Derek Bastiman Chair of Scrutiny Board



As Chair of the Scrutiny Board, I am pleased to introduce the 2020/21 Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report.

The circumstances of the last year have been exceptional and challenging for all. It has been important for Members involved in overview and scrutiny to ensure we have been supportive of the efforts of frontline services in their response to the pandemic, whilst also continuing our role as 'critical friends'.

On reviewing the achievements of the last year, I am confident that we have struck this balance well and have also risen to the challenges of operating remotely. While it may not have been possible in the spring/early summer of 2020 to hold scrutiny meetings in public, committees quickly adapted to holding informal meetings or seeking briefings from the directorates; focussing work programmes around ensuring that the response to pandemic was being co-ordinated effectively. As soon as mechanisms were in place for us to meet in public – via live broadcasted meetings – we embraced that new challenge and worked with senior officers to ensure that some of the broader work of scrutiny could continue more formally.

Between 19th May 2020 (once the Regulations enabled remote 'public' meetings) and 31st March 2021, there have been 13 live broadcasted meetings of the council's scrutiny committees, plus another 20 meetings of the Area Constituency Committees. Viewing figures for all of these meetings have ranged from around 15 to well over 100 views for some meetings; well in excess of the average public attendance normally expected for scrutiny committees pre-pandemic. I must commend colleagues, officers and partners for their respective roles in making this possible.

You will note from the report that each committee will be continuing scrutiny of the response to the pandemic, how this may have changed the way that our services operate and how local communities will be supported to 're-shape' through their recovery. I have no doubt that the shadow cast by Covid-19 – but also the opportunities it has presented for doing things differently – will dominate our work programmes for some time to come.

I would like to record my appreciation to all of the Scrutiny Board Members for their contribution during this past year; their unfailing commitment and enthusiasm during these difficult circumstances has ensured the continued strength of overview and scrutiny work. This is clearly a shared endeavour though and I would also like to express my gratitude for the support we have received from officers within the directorates and also our partners for continuing this productive relationship with the scrutiny process during such a challenging period.

I commend this report to the council.

Introduction

At the start of the first national lockdown on 23 March 2020, all formal public meetings of the Council's committees were suspended. Government regulations then came into effect on 4 April 2020 enabling remote meetings to take place and to make formal decisions at those meetings. Over the period May to August 2020, a number of the Council's formal, public committee meetings were held as live broadcast meetings, but not all. Live broadcast meetings of the Council's overview and scrutiny committees recommenced in September 2020.

During the 5 months that the Council's overview and scrutiny committees did not formally meet in public, informal meetings and briefings were held with either the full committee or with the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Group Spokespersons. This enabled an ongoing dialogue about the Council's response to the pandemic and also for non-pandemic related issues on policy and service development to be addressed.

An update has been provided, below, on some of the key topics considered by each of the thematic overview and scrutiny committees, along with an outline of key areas of work for the year ahead.

Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The committee's focus over the last 12 months has included:

- Traded Services Review – supporting the Executive decision to work to protect the outdoor learning service centres at Bewerley Park and East Barnby – next steps, to engage in the strategic review of the services, with the aim of supporting long term sustainability.
- Progress against the SEND Strategy.
- Reviewing the County Council's proposals for deployment of the Covid Winter Grant Scheme.
- Reviewing the successes to date within the Coastal Opportunity Area around raising aspirations and prospects for children and young people and recognising the challenges that remain to fulfilling those goals.
- Impact of the pandemic on young people, particularly those more vulnerable, and the pressures on youth organisations.
- Receiving presentations from both portfolio holders regarding how schools have adapted to meet the challenges of the pandemic and the impact of the pandemic on children's social care.
- Update on the work of the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Looking ahead to the next year, key areas of focus for the Committee will include:

- Implications of the increasing numbers of parents who have opted for Elective Home Education as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Traded Services Review.
- Progress on the SEND Strategy.
- Safeguarding Children Partnership – reviewing how successfully all partners are addressing young people's emotional and mental health wellbeing, plus exploring the advantages and need for greater transparency in the most difficult and sensitive cases.
- Educational attainment performance across our schools.

- School place planning – shaping future education provision. Update on the overall picture, both current and forecast, in terms of pupil numbers in North Yorkshire schools and report on the issues and challenges for school place planning.

Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Over the last 12 months the committee has been:

- Maintaining an overview of the impact of Covid-19 on the care market and how the directorate has responded.
- Understanding the impact of Covid-19 on the independent care sector, how the whole care sector has survived the crisis and supporting the committee's understanding of what a more sustainable future for social care might look like.
- Reviewing the success of the Extra Care Housing scheme in North Yorkshire.
- Reviewing the directorate's Local Account for North Yorkshire, setting out how services have supported people across the county, how public money has been invested and what the aims are in 2020/21.
- Looking at how social prescribing is being deployed through primary care networks to use a holistic approach to supporting individuals' needs and also enabling them to take greater control of their own health.
- Developing our understanding of the council's new 'Supported living Model', which aims to bring about better outcomes for vulnerable people and more housing options for people with disabilities, as well as savings in care costs.

Looking ahead, the committee's work programme will include:

- Living Well – reviewing experience over the last year and reflections on the impact of the pandemic.
- Revisiting a review of how NYCC is ensuring that Direct Payments enable more choice and control over the support people receive and how Direct Payments help to meet their social care needs.
- Examining how NYCC has worked with user representative groups during the Covid-19 response.
- Revisiting the market intervention in Supported Living.
- Suicide Prevention and Audit – Update on prevalence and related issues; how the committee can support the suicide prevention agenda.
- Support for carers – support provided to adult carers of adults in North Yorkshire, including reference to contract for the provision of the Adult Carers Service and Young Carers Support and Advice.

Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Over the last 12 months the committee has been:

- Understanding the support being given by the County Council for apprenticeships, particularly during the pandemic.

- Reviewing the County Council's refreshed Plan for Economic Growth.
- Reviewing the outcomes of the evaluation of the Highways Maintenance Contract and providing appropriate challenge around aspects of some of the results, with a view to ensuring that there continues to be further improvement in the service.
- Looking at support from the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to struggling businesses during the pandemic and considering the LEP's five-year Economic Plan.
- Commenting on safety improvements undertaken by Highways England on the A64 and continuing to press for the dualling of the A64 as a means of securing the longer-term economic health of the county.
- Reviewing road casualty figures for the county for 2019 and provisional figures for 2020.
- Commenting on the council's draft Air Quality Strategy 2020-2045.
- Exploring the implications of the pandemic for the sustainability of rural bus services, including the national bus strategy "Bus Back Better".

Over the next year, the committee will look to:

- Discuss the findings and recommendations of the Rural Commission.
- Receive a report on the climate change assessment requirements for inclusion in reports.
- Discuss the implementation of Active Travel schemes in the county.
- Review progress made following the committee's review of the council's 20mph speed limit policy.
- Receive an update on the performance of Allerton Waste Recovery Park.
- Consider an update on the work of the York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership and the impacts of Brexit on the local economy now that UK has left the EU.

Corporate & Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Over the last year, the committee has:

- Reviewed progress around property services and the rationalisation of NYCC's property portfolio, albeit with attendant delays resulting from the pandemic.
- Developed its understanding of the threat to the council's operations posed by cybercrime and the measures in place to counteract this threat.
- Sought an update on improvements to the Parish Portal and we will continue to seek updates around work on the Members' dashboard.
- Received bi-annual updates from the Community Safety Partnership and also considered the implications of national lockdowns in relation to increases in calls to domestic abuse helplines.
- Considered the recent inspection report of the Youth Justice Service – as a result wrote to the Ministry of Justice with concerns about the operation of a 24-hour reception at Young Offender institutions. The committee also sought reassurance from the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner regarding tackling County Lines gangs.

- Received annual updates on: the council's alternative investment framework; the council's Corporate Volunteer Project; the North Yorkshire Refugee Resettlement Programme and implementation of the council's Workforce Plan.
- Undertook a scrutiny review on a proposal to ban the release of all types of sky lanterns on property and land owned by North Yorkshire County Council.
- Kept a watching brief on the governance arrangements for the Brierley Group.

Looking ahead, the Committee's work programme will include:

- Update from the PFCC on progress with implementation of collaborative working between the Police and Fire and Rescue Service.
- Performance update from Youth Justice Service.
- Overview of progress with achieving the Council's Equality and Diversity objectives & update on the development of an Action Plan by Management Board Task Group.
- Progress update on implementation of Council Plan Priorities & an overview of the development of a refreshed Council Plan.
- Performance update on the Brierley Group.

Scrutiny of Health Committee

Over the last year, the committee has:

- Scrutinised proposed and actual changes to Stroke services, Oncology and Urology at Scarborough Hospital.
- Considered the implications of significant structural issues to the future delivery of services from Airedale Hospital; resulting in the committee writing to local MPs and the Secretary of State to urge that capital funding is directed to the hospital.
- Considered the NHS response to the first wave of the pandemic, how this changed the way in which services were delivered and what lessons were learned.
- Reviewed proposed changes to the Healthy Child Programme.
- Considered developments in community and in-patient mental health services.
- Considered progress made with the Covid-19 vaccination programme in the county.
- Reviewed progress on the re-development of Whitby Hospital.
- Monitored the implementation of improvement plans put in place by Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust and York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust in response to CQC inspections.

Looking ahead, the committee's programme of work will include:

- Maintaining an overview of progress with the development of new urgent, emergency and critical care facilities at Scarborough Hospital following a £47 million capital investment;
- Continuing to review the local NHS response to the Covid-19 pandemic, including progress with vaccination and the NHS recovery plan.

- Scrutinising the development of the Integrated Care Systems and Partnerships that will play an increasingly prominent role in the commissioning and provision of health services in the county.
- Examination of how health services respond to changes, e.g. population growth, brought about through local authority planning systems – and how the funding for this works.
- Ongoing monitoring of the changes to the use of the primary care estate, following changes in practice resulting from the pandemic; with a particular focus upon closure of satellite sites and the consolidation of services in one main practice;
- Monitoring of CQC inspection reports and any action plan resulting for services provided to the people of North Yorkshire
- Reviewing the NHS White Paper and its implications for health, social care and scrutiny.
- Reviewing access to NHS dentistry in the county.

Overview and scrutiny functions are also supported through the following bodies:

- Scrutiny Board – this is made up of the Chairs of the five thematic overview and scrutiny committees, along with the Champions for Young People and Older People, and enables co-ordination across all five thematic overview and scrutiny committees.
- Police, Fire and Crime Panel - which scrutinises the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. There is also a Complaints Sub-Committee which meets on an ad-hoc basis. The County Council is the host authority for the Panel and the Panel is supported by the County Council's scrutiny team, along with officers providing guidance from Legal, Communications and Finance.
- Corporate Parenting Group – this is not a formal committee but acts as an informal advisory group to the Executive Portfolio Holder for Children's and Young Peoples Services, the Executive and County Council. The group performs a role consistent with statutory guidance for local authorities to promote the health and well-being of looked-after children.

North Yorkshire Scrutiny Officers' Network

This group is an informal information-sharing group for overview and scrutiny officer leads across the county. Over the last year, the network has considered issues such as local authorities' scrutiny focus on the response to the pandemic and Covid-19 recovery within the local economy; scrutiny of the changes to Scarborough Hospital; and scrutiny of local climate change and carbon dioxide emissions reduction plans. The network has also provided a key forum for the sharing of information and ideas, in particular around setting up and managing remote access committee meetings.

Call-In

There have been no Call-Ins at the County Council this year.

In-depth reviews

Extended pieces of overview and scrutiny can be undertaken, where a more in-depth analysis of the issues is required. Over the past 12 months, the following pieces of work have continued to progress.

20mph speed limit policy task group

This task group was developed through the Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee to look at the council's current policy regarding the introduction of 20mph speed limits. The groups' final report and recommendations were submitted to the Executive on 24 November 2020. The recommendations included:

- updating NYCC's policy to be more explicit in considering 20mph limits around schools;
- taking a wider view than purely historical accident statistics when determining suitability for a 20mph limit; as such widening the policy to include driver education, supporting alternative modes of transport and shaping the built environment.

The committee will now continue to monitor progress against the implementation of its recommendations.

Single-Use Plastics

The Transport, Economy and Environment Committee has also been leading on a piece of work – via a task group - relating to reducing the unnecessary use of single-use plastics in the county. The group received a briefing last year from staff in procurement and property services on the NYCC supply chain and initiatives undertaken to reduce use of single-use plastic. The group also examined the policy statements, commitments and action plans of other local authorities that have taken the lead to date on reducing their usage. A report went to the Executive on 23rd March 2021, which set out a number of recommendations for the council, including:

- Producing a concise policy statement with high-level commitments to reduce single-use plastics in its buildings and in its supplier chain.
- Having a senior officer 'champion' on the council's Management Board to promote reduction of single-use plastics;
- Progressing work to understand the scope to amend, or include new standard contractual terms and conditions to embed a commitment to reduce single-use plastics amongst its suppliers.

The full report is available online at <https://edemocracy.northyorks.gov.uk> (see Executive/23 March 2021).

Other Approaches

Work with Area Constituency Committees –

The council's six Area Constituency Committees (ACCs) have continued to work closely with the overview and scrutiny committees and particularly with the Scrutiny of Health Committee. Building upon the work that the Skipton and Ripon ACC has done in leading the scrutiny of the re-development of the Castleberg Hospital at

Giggleswick, the following proposed development to local health services have been referred to the local ACC:

Richmond (Yorks) ACC – the development of the Catterick Health Campus
Thirsk and Malton ACC - project that is being set up across health and social care to look at developing primary care and ancillary services in and around Easingwold.

The Scarborough and Whitby ACC is also taking an active role in reviewing proposed and actual changes to services at Scarborough hospital and also the development of services at the Whitby hospital site.

Joint Scrutiny

The West Yorkshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee has continued to meet to review the development of the Integrated Care System for West Yorkshire, which includes Craven population and which has implications for the Harrogate population. It is anticipated that similar arrangements will be put in place for the Humber Coast and Vale Integrated Care System over the next year.

Climate Change Scrutiny Joint Sub-Committee

In December 2009 the County Council issued a Statement of Intent to play its part in contributing to the national target set in 2008 of an 80% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2050, with at least a 34% reduction by 2018-22. In 2019, the County Council committed to produce its own carbon reduction plan with the ambitions of beating the government's goal of 2050 and to aspire to achieve net carbon neutrality by as close as possible to 2030. To take this work forward, a sub-committee was formed comprising Members of the council's 5 overview and scrutiny committees. The remit of the sub-committee was to:

- review existing work by the Council to reduce carbon dioxide emissions that result from its own activities and service provision;
- identify possible actions that could be taken to further reduce carbon dioxide emissions that result from the Council's own activities and service provision; and
- refer the findings and resulting recommendation(s) from this scrutiny review to the Executive.

Further to two meetings of the Sub-Committee and some additional officer research commissioned by them, the council is in the process of developing its carbon reduction plan and embedding use of a climate change assessment tool which will ensure that climate impacts are fully considered within council decision making. The Sub-Committee have looked at 'quick win' and longer term projects for the council. Some proposals, such as a campus boiler replacement programme, will be taken forward; others will need to be fully costed and assessed. Further work to realise the council's objective for 2030 will be taken forward through each of the scrutiny committees, with the Transport Economy and Environment Committee acting as the lead.

Notice of Motion

In 2020/21 two Notices of Motion were reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny. These were:

- Support for all NHS Hospital Trusts in the county to provide free on-site parking for NHS staff at their work place. Additionally, to invite the Trusts to consider how parking policy and grants for using sustainable travel options for NHS staff could best achieve longer-term carbon reduction and sustainable travel.
- A ban on the release of all types of sky lanterns on property and land owned by the County Council and a resolution to ask all parish and town councils in the county to pass a similar motion. Additionally, for the County Council to engage with business communities, landowners, schools and individuals to encourage them to sign up to this initiative.

How to find out more about Overview and Scrutiny

Further information on Overview and Scrutiny is available on the North Yorkshire County Council website - [Overview and scrutiny | North Yorkshire County Council](#)

Or contact the Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager, Daniel Harry
E: daniel.harry@northyorks.gov.uk or T: 01609 533531.

Members of the public are welcome to attend any meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees. Where these are conducted via live broadcast, they may be viewed at www.northyorks.gov.uk/live-meetings/

Committee papers are available from the North Yorkshire County Council website as follows - <http://edemocracy.northyorks.gov.uk/>