

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

21 July 2021

STATEMENT OF THE CORPORATE & PARTNERSHIPS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Since my last statement to Council in May 2021, the Corporate and Partnership Overview and Scrutiny Committee has met once on 7 June 2021.

At the meeting, the Committee received a number of annual updates, which included an update on Property Services. Our attention was focussed on the impact of Covid on the Council's rationalisation projects and the remodelling of the Brierley Building, and the ongoing work to improve energy efficiencies and reduce consumption. We noted the support that had been given to staff working from home and the re-opening of workspaces in offices – we were pleased to note the clean bill of health given to us by the HSE following spot checks on our buildings. We also discussed the potential impact of the Local Government Review e.g. the preparations required for the change in the Council's building portfolio

We also received an update on the delivery of the Community Safety Plan and the ongoing partnership working in support of its delivery. Unfortunately, the Partnership Chair was unable to attend the meeting at short notice, so the Committee requested a written response to a list of questions. The committee will continue to receive bi-annual updates and we have asked that next time the report focus on LGBT Groups and hate crime.

The Committee received an update on Library Services, which provided an overview of the adaptations made to service delivery since March 2020 in response to Covid. The update detailed the successful steps taken to deliver services online and reassured us that financially the libraries had weathered the storm reasonably well. We were pleased to note the close working with stronger communities and the be-friending work undertaken throughout the pandemic. Also, the success of the Select & Collect service, introduced in response to the pandemic and the plan for its continuation post-Covid. We therefore focussed our attention on the challenges ahead which include rebuilding customer confidence to come back in to our library buildings and maintaining volunteer numbers.

Finally, the Committee received its annual update on Locality Budgets. We were disappointed to note that there were two Councillors who had not spent any of their budget in the last year. We also noted the mixed picture in regard to seed funding.

County Councillor Derek Bastiman
Chair of Corporate & Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Committee
12 July 2021