

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

17 November 2021

STATEMENT OF THE CORPORATE & PARTNERSHIPS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE VICE-CHAIRMAN

Since the Chairman's last statement to Council in July 2021, the Corporate and Partnership Overview and Scrutiny Committee has met once on 13 September 2021.

The meeting was attended by the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner who provided an update on the implementation of the plans for collaboration between North Yorkshire Police and North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service. The presentation confirmed the retention of two separate Services each with their own ethos and traditions, but highlighted a range of efficiencies and opportunities arising from the coming together of the two services.

We took the opportunity to raise concerns about the 101 number, the sustainability of rural fire services and the retention of volunteer firefighters, and were pleased to note that improvements to 101 was number one on the Commissioners agenda. Also, that reform was underway for on-call fire fighters to make the pay more attractive, and in the more rural areas, the introduction of more public safety officers. A visit to the new Police Control Room is also being arranged for Committee Members.

At the meeting, the Committee also received a number of annual updates, which included an update on the work of the Stronger Communities team, an update on the operation of the Parish Portal, and an overview of the performance of the Youth Justice Service.

In regard to the Stronger Communities Programme, the Committee were interested to note the number of people still seeking practical support from the 23 CSOs still in operation and raised concern about scope creep i.e. the danger of the exceptional level of support provided throughout the pandemic becoming an expectation from receivers. We agreed it would require re-education and the weaning of those individuals off the high level of support they had become used to. We also received an update on the Corporate Volunteering project, and were pleased to note the development of a volunteer feedback survey from which to create a baseline of data to assist in identifying future improvements.

In regard to the work of the Youth Justice Team, we noted their ongoing work with schools on early prevention and diversion, with a particular focus on inclusion for children from hard to reach families and those with high levels of social need. We also received an overview of the recent national inspection findings, which had rated the Service as outstanding for its 'Desistence' work and good for its 'safety & wellbeing' work, and were pleased to note the steps that had been taken to modify the model and retrain the team in order to address its rating on 'safety of others' which had fallen just short of good.

In regard to the Parish Portal, we raised concern about the accuracy of the feedback information sometimes provided via the portal, but accepted that lessons were being constantly learned about how best to manage and feedback on reported issues. We requested that those Parish Councils still not using the portal be targeted to encourage their take-up of the system, and we look forward to the roll out of the new Members' Dashboard, having had members of the Committee involved in its testing.

Finally, the Committee received an introduction to the work of the Resilience & Emergencies team, which provided an overview of the legalisations that governed the Authority's response to major incidents and the County Council's statutory requirements and various workflows. Now that the committee has been familiarised with the work of the team, we will be keeping a watching brief going forward.

County Councillor Bryn Griffiths
Vice-Chairman of Corporate & Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Committee
5 November 2021