

**Council**

**15 December 2022**

## **Report of the Chair of Customer & Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee**

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As has been previously noted, the Scrutiny function in York continues to suffer from a lack of dedicated Officer time, meaning that scoping reports and independent reviews are somewhat stymied. Furthermore, unnecessary frustrations occur on all sides with regards to report preparation, content and publication. In recent weeks this has again led to avoidable last-minute cancellations, deferments and reports which have not met the full requests of the Chair and/or Committee.

I would like to again record my thanks to the Democratic Services Team for doing all they can under difficult circumstances to assist in the delivery of meaningful Scrutiny, in particular with regards to the timely rescheduling meetings where needed.

Scrutiny can and should be a tool which can benefit everyone – Executive, Officers, ‘back bench’ Members and the Public – in helping to ensure the effective and purposeful running of the Council. Working alongside the Monitoring Officer and Statutory Scrutiny Officer it is hoped that a comprehensive schedule of training will be made available to Members and relevant Officers at the start of - and throughout - the next Council administration, following May’s elections such that it can be used to its full potential.

Since my last report to Full Council the Customer & Corporate Services and Scrutiny Management Committee has met twice. In October we held a specially commissioned meeting, following-up on two previous call-ins, to discuss University of York Car Parking arrangements, the impact on the surrounding communities and any obligations under Section 106 Agreements. The meeting was attended by representatives of the University alongside Council Officers from Legal and Planning. Members were pleased to note the constructive engagement of all stakeholders and reports from the Ward Councillor of improvements to the situation in recent weeks which it is hoped will continue.

In November, Committee considered an update on the City Centre Access Strategy alongside the “Reverse The Ban” petition that was submitted at the last meeting of Full Council. After a lengthy and in-depth discussion between Officers, Members and external Stakeholders, it was agreed that Committee will monitor progress against the Access

Strategy with greater frequency going forward. In accordance with the Council's Petitions Scheme, Officers were requested to prepare a detailed report for Executive that responds to the "Reverse The Ban" petition and addresses the more than 700 Comments that were recorded in support of the petition. Meanwhile the Monitoring Officer was requested to satisfy himself that the legal position taken by the council remains sufficiently robust in light of the Supreme Court's ruling that Westminster City Council failed to respond in a proportionate manner in respect of Article 8 of the Human Rights Act with regards to an access ban on a Blue Badge Holder.

As with my last report to Council, I have invited each of the Committee Chairs to provide a short summary of their Committee's work, as follows:

**Cllr Vassie, Chair of Climate Emergency:**

For the first time a public meeting in West Offices considered a vision and plan for York's transport future, presented by Tony May and Johan Kuylenstierna who showed where the city might be in 2027 and in 2037 if the council were genuinely trying to deliver a zero carbon future for transport. This plan addressed the scale of the challenge the city faces: from freight distribution, to access, to congestion, to mass-transit systems and zoning of the city, and considered how a zero carbon transport vision would impact on the dualling of the northern ring road. The meeting agreed a series of recommendations calling on the executive to get on with shaping a transport vision for York and engaging with the scale of the challenge.

The committee looked at the latest draft of the Climate Change Strategy and noted that it still did not commit the council to any measured pathway with milestones to deliver a zero carbon York nor set out any process to evaluate all the council's operations against these milestones.

Lastly, the committee reviewed the most recent phase of 'The Big Conversation' and was pleased to note that the consultation reached a far wider audience second time around, including: young people, students, the BAME community, parents with young families, LGBTQ, small businesses, residents with disabilities, blue collar workers and trades unions. We noted the wide understanding of climate issues and solutions across those groups and their desire that the council be bold and imaginative in its actions to tackle climate change.

### **Cllr Fenton, Chair of Housing & Community Safety:**

At October's public meeting the committee discussed the homelessness situation in the city and plans for winter provision. Members also had a detailed discussion on York's Housing Allocations policy and the challenges created by demand for homes continuing to outstrip supply. The focus of December's meeting is on the support being made available to council tenants in the face of the cost of living emergency. Looking ahead, in January the committee hopes to have the opportunity to input into the development of a new Community Safety Strategy.

### **Cllr Doughty, Chair of Health & Adult Social Care:**

Since October, members of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee will have met on 3 occasions by the time of December Full Council.

Early in November, there was a joint meeting with the Children, Education and Communities Scrutiny Committee to discuss a refresh of the all-age Autism Strategy for the City with members noting the importance of consultation with stakeholders being supported. We also received a report providing an overview of York's Healthy Child Service.

At the main November Health Scrutiny meeting we received reports from two of our Health Service partners.

We were joined in person at the meeting by the Chief Executive of York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust who updated us on the two Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspections which were undertaken in March and October this year. We heard about the action plan taking place to address the findings of the CQC and members asked questions thereon.

Similarly, we received an update report regarding the action plan following the TEWV Trust wide inspection by the CQC last year and also an update on the CQC registration of Foss Park Hospital. The Managing Director of TEWV joined the meeting remotely for this. The report included details of an inspection into Trust wide specialist community mental health services for children and young people which took place in July this year. It is fair to say that there was member concern at aspects of this, particularly with referrals and waiting times.

Members made recommendations for monitoring. There had already been a forward work plan item pencilled in for a Children and Young People Plan / CAMHS Provision in York report for consideration in the 2023/2024 municipal year and as Chair, I made suggestion this should be a priority for early on in the new municipal year, with an update from TEWV appropriate as part of this.

Members also considered a report from the Public Health team and asked questions on the recommissioning of Sexual Health and Contraception Services in York.

At the time of writing, the Health Scrutiny Committee is also due to meet on the 14th December for a commissioned slot, hearing from colleagues from the Humber and North Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership for an Integrated Care System Overview including detail on elective care post pandemic and access to GP services. We are expecting to be joined by some member colleagues from other local authorities in the ICS area for this item.

### **Cllr Daubeney, Chair of Children, Education & Communities:**

In early November, the Committee received a report on the Safety Valve agreement, updating the committee on how the city is taking advantage of this government scheme to eradicate the deficit on the High Needs Block of the dedicated schools grant. At that meeting we also received the Financial Quarter Q1 report from officers ensuring oversight of the relevant expenditures in Children's Services.

The Committee continued its regular oversight of progress against of the Ofsted Action Plan for Children's Services, following the Ofsted judgement in March that York 'Required improvement to be good'. Progress against the plan continues to be made in seven key areas designed to improve the quality of services and provide a better start for Children and Young People in York as set out in the Council Plan.

Finally, the Committee received a presentation from the Corporate Director of Children's Services into the Safeguarding Children Partnership (CYSCP) setting out the responsibilities of the partners, Council, Police and the Health and Care Partnership, the role of the Independent Scrutineer and the key areas of activity of the group: the Inspections, accountability and ensuring the voices of children are heard.

Later in November, the committee took part in a Joint Scrutiny with the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee which considered a refresh of the York All-Age Autism Strategy aligned with the national strategy for Autistic Children, Young People and Adults 2021-2026. The planned focus is to be on co-production of the strategy in partnership, sharing power between people who draw on care and support, carers, families and citizens with a view to understanding the issues faced and designing the solutions together.

Finally at the second November meeting, an overview of the Healthy Child Service was presented by officers for information, setting out the Council's ambition in the Council Plan to improve outcomes for those in poor health together with a strong health protection element. The Healthy Child Programme was explained in detail from antenatal contact, through a range of programmes such as Targeted support for speech and language, hearing and vision screening to targeted support for emotional wellbeing and healthy lifestyles support from 5-19 years.

#### **Cllr Taylor, Chair of Economy & Place:**

At October's meeting, Committee considered the city's Purple Flag status, the proposed Community Levy (SIL money in parished areas) and the Council's Highway maintenance programme.

In November, Committee undertook a deeper dive into the Council's ResPark scheme including consideration of the ongoing difficulties caused by the move to Digital permits. Committee recommended that Council move back to paper permits for visitor parking.

There continue to be frustrations surrounding the preparation and content of reports which have not contained the requested information on a number of occasions, leading to missed opportunities for meaningful scrutiny of important topics. This is a situation that I hope will be remedied for future meetings.