

Report of the Chair of the Customer Services, Climate Change and Scrutiny Management Committee (CSCCSMC) – March 2025

1. In my report for November's Full Council I welcomed news that the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) had been commissioned to undertake a review of the council's scrutiny arrangements. This was in response to the report arising from the LGA peer review undertaken last year, and the subsequent improvement plan adopted by Executive.
2. I would like to thank CfGS for their active engagement and thank members who inputted into the review. I would also like to thank officers who supported the review and drafted the subsequent action plan. This was discussed by CSCCSMC members and scrutiny chairs and vice chairs on 10 March¹, and feedback from that discussion² was shared with Executive ahead of their meeting on 11 March at which a number of changes to current scrutiny arrangements were agreed³. I look forward to working with colleagues to help implement these new arrangements and to evaluate the impacts over the coming year.

CSCCSMC

3. At its 9 December meeting the committee discussed a report setting out progress with the York Central major project. Officers were joined by external partners and there was a productive discussion on the evolving ambitions for the site in terms of the creation of new jobs and homes. Members also received an officer report on the work of the York Climate Commission (YCC). Members are keen to support the work of the YCC and it was agreed to return to this issue at a future meeting.
4. At its 20 January meeting the committee was invited to review the council's draft Social Value Policy. There was a wide-ranging discussion covering many aspects of the draft policy and it was resolved that the feedback be reflected in the final version.

¹ <https://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1064&MId=14680>

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<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/b41032/Agenda%20Supplement%201%20Review%20of%20CYC%20Scrutiny%20Function%20Tuesday%2011-Mar-2025%2016.30%20Executive.pdf?T=9>

³ <https://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/q14506/Decisions%20Tuesday%2011-Mar-2025%2016.30%20Executive.pdf?T=2>

Members received a report setting out the key research findings relating to carbon offsetting/insetting and provided feedback on a draft set of best practice principles which could underpin an emerging strategy. The committee also received an update on the status of the Castle Gateway major project.

5. At its 10 March meeting the CfGS scrutiny review and resulting action plan was the main topic of discussion and the Leader and Deputy Leader were present to listen to members' views. Members also reviewed an updated list of actions arising from council motions which indicates that whilst some progress has been made, a number of actions remain outstanding.

Children, Culture & Communities Scrutiny Committee

6. At its 3 December meeting the committee received an annual update from Explore Libraries and Archives Mutual Limited who operate the council's libraries and archives service. Members offered their congratulations on ten years of Explore delivering the library and archives service, as well as on the opening of the new Clifton Library in late 2024 and the sixtieth anniversary of Huntington Library. Members also received a report which outlined the Council's Sufficiency Duties to ensure there are enough homes for children in the care of the local authority. Members discussed the Corporate Parenting Annual report for 2023/24 and welcomed news that the co-production approach taken in developing 'Together We Can' was nominated for a national award, indicating that the council is being recognised for changes that have taken place in recent times.
7. At its 14 January meeting the committee received an update on work taking place to develop an 'Integrated Neighbourhood Team' model as a way of delivering improved outcomes for individuals, communities, and for the wider system of health, care and community based services in the city. The committee is keen to be consulted again prior to the next report to Executive due in Summer 2025.
8. Members undertook pre-decision scrutiny of proposals to introduce a new fostering fee framework and a number of recommendations were agreed including that any potential communication regarding the framework should be taken to an appropriate forum for children in care before publication.

9. Members received a report on outcomes for the academic year 2023/24 in relation to the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers. It was resolved to receive another report in a year's time. Members also received the Annual Report and noted the work of the Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education (SACRE) during the academic year 2023-24.

Economy, Place, Access and Transport Scrutiny Committee

10. At its 26 November meeting the committee considered a report setting out the current approach to home to school travel in York and inviting views on options available to make journeys safer, increase active travel, and reduce congestion and air pollution around school sites. A number of recommendations were agreed, including that school travel should be a priority, both in developing transport plans and in bids for funding.
11. Members received a report outlining existing recycling practices and evaluating current performance in relation to collection and disposal methods. Support was expressed for recommendations set out in the report and members made a number of other recommendations.
12. At its 10 December meeting the committee discussed a report which summarised activity in support of the delivery of the Economic Strategy 2022-2032, together with the Council Plan priority action "A fair and thriving economy for all." A representative from the York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority was present for the discussion and members recommended that work undertaken to support people into employment acknowledges individuals' mental and physical health.
13. At its 28 January meeting the committee received a report which reviewed the implementation of the fully chargeable garden waste subscription scheme which was launched in July 2024. Members asked that their thanks be passed to all officers and collection crews involved in the rollout of the service and made a number of recommendations, including a request that the Council seek to expand access to the garden waste collections subscription service.

14. Members' views were sought on how a 'Neighbourhood Caretaker' model may be developed. Members recommended that the desired outcomes include targets for addressing climate change and creating a bio-diverse city.
15. At its 25 February meeting the committee considered a report summarising key data published on the gender pay gap in York for City of York Council and other large employers in the city. A number of recommendations were agreed including a request for the Chief Strategy Officer to feed back to HR around the issues raised by the committee which could be fed into an upcoming report to the Staffing Matters and Urgency Committee.

Health, Housing & Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee

16. At its 4 December meeting the committee's views were sought on the latest draft of the 'Responsive Repairs Policy for Tenants of Council Houses'. Members fed back on a number of aspects, such as suggesting that the accessibility and clarity of the policy be improved for tenants. Officers were asked to consider members' feedback as they review and update the document. Members also considered a report presenting an overview of the current position regarding empty (void) council house properties and noted the current positive position.
17. At its 15 January meeting the committee considered a report setting out a proposal approved by the Council's Executive in November 2024 to form a Joint Committee between Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board and City of York Council. Members fed back on a number of areas such as the extent to which climate change considerations have been taken into account and the equity of resource allocation across the six Place areas covered by the ICB given York's historically low allocation.
18. At its 12 March meeting the committee considered a report providing an overview of the outcome of the council house Stock Condition Survey and how the information is being utilised to influence investment plans in the coming five years, as well as analysis of performance of the Asset Management function against agreed targets.