
Corporate Scrutiny

8 September 2025

Report of the Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer

A Shared Vision for Scrutiny in York

Summary

1. This report presents the Committee with a Shared Vision for Scrutiny in York document (Annex A) developed by the Scrutiny Review Working Group and agreed with the Council Leader and Deputy Leader. Members are asked to agree to the Shared Vision sitting in the charge of the Committee as a 'live' document.
2. An Executive / Scrutiny Protocol for City of York Council, also developed by the Working Group and agreed with the Leader and Deputy Leader, has been referred to the Audit and Governance Committee, and is included for information at Annex B.

Background

3. Following the February 2024, Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Challenge of the City of York Council, the subsequent report presented to the Council's Executive in May 2024 stated: "Scrutiny arrangements at CYC would benefit from review. As a function of governance, it can be hugely beneficial for quality of decision-making if it is fully supported and empowered to be a positive and integral part of policy development. It is clear that this is recognised by the administration as an area where a fresh look at how improvements can be made would also be a good use of time and effort."
4. The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) was therefore commissioned to undertake a Scrutiny Impact Review of City of York Council. This review was conducted in November and December 2024.
5. The final CfGS recommendations were reported to the Corporate Services, Climate Change and Scrutiny Management Committee on 10 March 2025, with a proposed action plan to address each of the

recommendations in full. All Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs were invited to attend the meeting and contribute to the debate.

6. The CfGS's Recommendation 1, as reported to the above meeting, stated: 'The Council should work to develop a shared vision and understanding of scrutiny.' The action plan proposed that this work be taken forward by a cross-party working group for discussion and agreement with the Leader and Deputy Leader once proposals had been developed.
7. This would aim to support and develop clarity over the role of scrutiny, and foster a robust organisational culture acknowledging and valuing the role of scrutiny in enhancing accountability and decision-making through collaboration and constructive challenge.
8. The CfGS's Recommendation 4, as reported to the above meeting, stated: 'Revisit and refresh the Cabinet/Scrutiny protocol, including the establishment of regular structured meetings between Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs and relevant Cabinet Member(s) to discuss collaboration and future mutual priorities and upcoming decisions and projects.' The action plan proposed that this work be taken forward by the same cross-party working group for discussion and agreement with the Leader and Deputy Leader once proposals had been developed.
9. Following agreement by the Committee, the recommendations, action plan and the comments of the Committee were then presented to Executive on 11 March 2025.
10. Following approval by Executive, the recommendations and action plan were then presented to Full Council on 27 March 2025. Council endorsed the proposed actions, including the establishment of a cross-party working group, consisting of all Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Scrutiny Committees, to lead and oversee work to implement the recommendations.
11. This group was then established as the Scrutiny Review Working Group and held its first meeting on 16 April 2025, with Cllrs Fenton and Merrett respectively elected Chair and Vice-Chair of the Working Group. Following the introduction of a revised scrutiny committee structure in May 2025, new scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs who were not already members of the Working Group were co-opted to its membership.
12. At its meeting on 5 June 2025, the Scrutiny Review Working Group considered examples of best practice from comparable local authorities to inform the development of a 'Shared Vision for Scrutiny' document,

and guidance published by the CfGS to assist with the development of a Scrutiny / Executive Protocol. Draft Shared Vision and Executive / Scrutiny Protocol documents were then developed and considered at the Working Group's meeting on 30 June 2025 and revised to take members' comments into account.

13. Revised drafts of the Shared Vision and Protocol documents were then considered by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Working Group in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader and agreed on 14 July 2025.
14. The agreed drafts were then approved by the Working Group at its meeting on 23 July.
15. The Protocol was referred to the Audit and Governance Committee, with the recommendation that the Protocol be approved for inclusion in the Council's Constitution, and was due to be considered by that committee at its meeting on 3 September 2025.
16. The Working Group recommended that the Shared Vision for Scrutiny in York be referred to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee to note, and that the document sit in the charge of the Committee as a 'live' document to be updated and adapted when required.

Consultation

17. Consultation on the Shared Vision has been undertaken by the cross-party Scrutiny Review Working Group, with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, with Democratic Services, and with the Director of Governance.

Implications

18. The implications are as follows:
 - **Financial** – none directly arising from this report. As noted in the report to Council on 27 March 2025, costs associated with the provision of training for members and officers can be met from existing budgets.
 - **Human Resources (HR)** – none directly arising from this report.
 - **Equalities** – none directly arising from this report.
 - **Legal** – none directly arising from this report. The Council has a statutory duty to operate a scrutiny function.
 - **Crime and Disorder** – none directly arising from this report.

- **Information Technology (IT)** – none directly arising from this report.
- **Property** – none directly arising from this report.
- **Other** – none directly arising from this report.

Risk Management

19. There are no known risks associated with the recommendations of this report.

Recommendations

20. Members are asked to note the Shared Vision document developed by the Scrutiny Review Working Group, and agree to the Shared Vision for Scrutiny in York sitting in the charge of the Committee as a 'live' document.

Reason: To strengthen the scrutiny function and to fulfil the recommendation endorsed by Council in March 2025 in relation to a Shared Vision for scrutiny in York.

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Officer

**Report
Approved**



Date 29 August 2025

Wards Affected:

All ☒

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

- Centre for Governance and Scrutiny, Scrutiny Impact Report: City of York Council,
<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s182228/Annex%20A%20York%20Scrutiny%20Impact%20Report.pdf>

- City of York Council Scrutiny Impact Review Action Plan,
<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s182229/Annex%20B%20Scrutiny%20Impact%20Review%20Action%20Plan.pdf>

Annexes

- Annex A: A Shared Vision for Scrutiny in York
- Annex B: Executive / Scrutiny Protocol for City of York Council

Abbreviations

CfGS – Centre for Governance and Scrutiny

LGA – Local Government Association