

A Shared Vision for Scrutiny in York

Scrutiny in York will ensure effective democratic accountability, support robust decision making, and enhance public service delivery. This will be achieved by a Member-led Scrutiny function which is held in high regard by its partners and stakeholders, and which will make a positive impact for the citizens of York.

Scrutiny is a core component of the governance structure of City of York Council. Scrutiny Members, the Executive and senior officers will all work to create a culture of collaboration and constructive challenge based on quality information, leading the way in making this vision a reality. Ensuring good Scrutiny in York is a whole council responsibility.

To achieve this, Scrutiny in York will follow the nationally agreed 'Four Principles of Good Scrutiny':¹

- Providing constructive “critical friend” challenge;
- Amplifying public voice and concerns;
- Being led by ‘independent minded people’ who take responsibility for their role;
- Driving improvement in public services.

To succeed, the Council recognises that the following conditions need to be present:

1. Parity of Esteem between Scrutiny and the Executive: Scrutiny should be held in high regard and treated with the same respect as Executive decision making functions, underpinning a positive culture of Scrutiny within the Council.
2. Councillor Leadership and Engagement: Scrutiny Members set their own work programmes and priorities and should be empowered to engage in a positive way with Scrutiny work.
3. Clarity of Purpose and Focus: Scrutiny activities should be well-planned, focused and timely, with a clear understanding of how they can add value, influence outcomes and make a meaningful impact.

¹ <https://www.cfqs.org.uk/revisiting-the-four-principles-of-good-scrutiny/>

4. Evidence Based Investigation and Clear Recommendations: Scrutiny should be impartial and driven by evidence and reasoning. Recommendations should be clear, feasible and deliverable, with their impact and resource implications considered.
5. Reflecting the Concerns of Residents: Scrutiny should reflect and value the views of citizens and service users and providers, and engage clearly and constructively with stakeholders including harder to reach groups.
6. Clear Roles, Responsibilities and Relationships: For Scrutiny to succeed, the roles of all participants in the Scrutiny process should be clear and understood by all.
7. Mutual Respect: Scrutiny should be constructive and challenging but will only succeed if all partners work together considerately and collaboratively within a climate of non-partisan working.
8. Effective Process – Scrutiny members should have timely access to relevant information to enable them to do their work.
9. Appropriate Training and Development: Scrutiny's role and value in supporting good decision making and policy development should be well understood by Members and Officers.