

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

**22 March 2021**

1. This report is submitted by the Chair of Customer & Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee (CSMC), in accordance with the constitutional requirements set out in Standing order 8.3 (m) to update Council on scrutiny work and to set out any recommendations such as may be made to Council in relation to that work.

## **Scrutiny Work**

2. In this particular report, it is probably more important to give an update on the re-introduction of scrutiny work in line with the corporate resources available to support it. Whilst scrutiny activity at the moment does not 'mirror' the way it was operated prior to the Covid 19 pandemic, we are now running monthly public Customer & Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee (CCSSMC) meetings, with one public Committee meeting of each Scrutiny Committee every 3 months and a Forum of those Committees in every 3 months too. In addition, we have also been holding public commissioned scrutiny meetings of those Committees or joint ones, as well as a number of Calling In Committee meetings.
3. CCSSMC has been focusing a considerable amount of its time keeping up to speed with and reviewing the impact of Covid 19 on the city's public health, Council services in general, the York economy, as well as on major projects and the operation of schools. In addition, the Committee has been briefed regularly on the overall current and forecast financial position facing the Council in light of the pandemic.
4. Since January 2021, our Scrutiny Committees have given their attention to the following areas:

**Childrens & Education Services** has been looking at safeguarding and have received the SACRE annual report. It also led on a joint commissioned scrutiny (with Economy & Place Committee) assessing the current scenario relating to young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), apprenticeships and the new York Skills & Employment Board.

**Climate Change** has received a trial of carbon literacy training with a view to this being potentially rolled out for all Councillors in the future.

The Committee has looked at York's tree canopy expansion target and key performance indicators (KPIs) for the zero carbon roadmap for York.

**Health & Adult Social Care** has reviewed commissioning on the care market and capacity requirements and has focussed specifically on the non-Covid 19 impacts of the pandemic, such as the effect on cancer or other long term illness patients, as well as on progress with Covid 19 vaccinations.

**Economy & Place** has looked at and commented on the Inward Investment and Economic Recovery Strategies for York, at the request of the Executive Member. In addition, it met with York traders and businesses across all sectors to understand how Make It York could work more successfully with them to improve the York offer and promotion of the city.

**Housing & Community Safety** has reviewed options for improving licensing for additional Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in York and has plans to review affordable housing on new developments and receive an update on community safety.

Further to the above, each Committee has variously received and reviewed the current quarter financial & performance monitoring reports affecting their areas of operation.

### **Post-Decision Call-Ins**

5. Following on from the Calling In Committee reviewing Executive decisions relating to the Asset Management Strategy 2017-22 held on 21 December, 2020, there has been one post-decision call-in since the beginning of this calendar year looking at the Executive decision to grant a £1m guarantee to Make It York, as a result of the impact of Covid 19 on the business. That meeting took place on 25 January 2021 and determined not to refer the Executive decision back for reconsideration.

### **Work Planning Process**

6. A new work planning process has been put in place to help manage, facilitate and plan scrutiny work given a shortage of corporate and democratic resource to support scrutiny activities. Members will appreciate that staff in Directorates have had considerable additional work to manage the impact of Covid 19 and flooding on residents and services, this winter. Compounding this, Democratic Services are still currently carrying 3 vacancies, although, 2 of those vacancies will be filled shortly.

7. In January I met with the Chief Operating Officer and was subsequently invited to attend CMT on March 10 with a view to continuing the constructive dialogue that has been established between Senior Officers and Committee Members that is essential to good Scrutiny. We acknowledged that there have been frustrations on all sides regarding requests for - and delivery of - timely reports for meetings and noted the need for clarity of purpose between all stakeholders when determining suitable areas for consideration by future Committee meetings.
8. For clarity's sake, the process currently employed requires Scrutiny Committees and Chairs to consider their work plans and feed their ideas/contributions (via Democratic Services) into the monthly corporate scrutiny work planning session held with the Chair/Vice Chair of CCSSMC, who then consider, manage and programme the business into the master corporate work plan (and individual Committee work plans) in conjunction with relevant officers and Chairs.

### **Scrutiny Chairs**

9. In addition, to the above scrutiny meetings and activities, all Scrutiny Chairs have been meeting together collectively, every 3 months, to reflect on where we are, look at issues arising within the work plan and look to the future in terms of scrutiny support. Our next meeting will take place on 17 March 2021.

### **Constitutional Review – Changes to Scrutiny**

10. Members will be aware that there is an ongoing review of the Council's Constitution, which, of course, will culminate in consideration by Audit & Governance Committee and ultimately Council approval. I anticipate changes to Scrutiny Procedure Rules and the way we currently operate our call in process and am currently liaising with the Director of Governance on how scrutiny will be consulted initially on those changes. Arrangements, for instance, are being made for all Scrutiny Chairs to meet to consider the impact and operation of any proposed new procedures/rules for Scrutiny. A review and refresh is timely given the likelihood of continuing adaptations in our digital working environment and the need for absolute clarity of purpose and understanding.

### **Report Recommendation**

11. Members are recommended to receive and note this report;

**Reason:** To comply with the Council's constitutional requirements for receiving an update from the Chair of CCSSMC

**Councillor J Crawshaw**

**Chair, Customer & Corporate Services Scrutiny Management & Policy Committee**