

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

15 July 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.

2. Committee Memberships and Support

There were a number of changes to Committee Memberships at Annual Council and I would like to thank those Members no longer sitting on Scrutiny for their contributions over the past municipal year. At the time of writing there remain a small number of outstanding issues to resolve regarding the coming year's Committee Memberships. I have made it clear that in my view allocations and appointments must respect the underlying spirit and purpose of the proportionality provisions as set out in the relevant legislation.

I note also that Committees have now been without dedicated Scrutiny Officers for over a year. Whilst the move towards more 'hybrid' roles within Democratic Services is understandable, I am deeply concerned by how stretched the department has become. For Scrutiny to be able to function in a meaningful way, Chairs and Committees need the support of suitably experienced Officers who are afforded time and space to undertake their roles. Robust checks and balances are at the heart of a healthy democracy and so whilst I remain optimistic that with appropriate resourcing York's Scrutiny Function can continue to provide constructive challenge and 'add value', I would observe that any reduction in democratic accountability is ultimately to all of our detriment.

Scrutiny Work

3. Since my last report, with Covid 19 restrictions easing, the Customer & Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee (CCSSMC) will be meeting face to face for the first time since February 2020. The remaining Scrutiny Committees have continued to meet remotely and it is hoped that they will return to fully constituted meetings – either in-person or remotely as legislation allows - in due course.

4. CCSSMC has continued to focus on Covid 19 and the impact on health and the economy as well as the overall current and forecast financial position facing the Council as a result of the pandemic.
5. Since April 2021, our Scrutiny Committees have given their attention to the following areas:

Childrens & Education Services have been looking at Community Hubs including funding of the Community Hubs Model and a discussion around areas for review into the post Covid Model for the Hubs in York. The Committee also looked at York's Education Recovery Strategy and also York Learning Annual Report to ensure that robust governance arrangements are in place.

Climate Change looked at an overview of the Council's approach to resident engagement and its role in delivering the York Climate Change Strategy and considered the extent to which resident engagement could inform and improve the feasibility, achievability and aspirations and encourage inclusive participation.

Health & Adult Social Care received an update on the transfer of A&E services to Vocare and also looked at the collaborative way in which health and care services worked during the Covid 19 pandemic and plans for the future. The Committee were also updated on Covid 19 by the Director of Public Health and discussed the progress being made on the All Age Learning Disability Strategy and the peer challenge which had been commissioned in Adult Services with a view to future planning in the service.

Economy & Place were asked to consider options against a criteria defined by the Executive Member for Environment and Climate Change which could increase waste recycling and aid the future of the recycling service. The Committee also received an update around "reskilling the workforce" aimed at the economic recovery strategy and considered the in-work poverty review and also the oversight of Skills Board and its reporting mechanisms.

Housing & Community Safety received their bi-annual performance report for Safer York Partnership and is due to receive their final report of the scrutiny review into the provision of affordable homes on new developments on 14 July.

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

Post-Decision Call-Ins

6. There have been no post-decision call-ins since April 2021.

Report Recommendation

7. 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