

Deputy Leader Report

As we approach the end of the municipal year, I'd like to thank Members for their hard work since last May and the start of this new council. We also approach financial year end with a lot of hard work having been done both on this year's budget and the setting of next year's budget. As we heard from one of our most experienced peer reviewers recently, the last year has been arguably their most difficult in 34 years in Local Government. So, it's probably worth underlining for some of our newer Members, it's not always like this, even if for the more experienced of us it sometimes feels like it.

This brings me to the Peer Review and a very welcome external review of how we operate and function as a council. The main findings and recommendations from this process will come to Executive soon. In such a challenging time for councils it would be easier not to be peer reviewed, but it is a healthy and positive thing for any organisation when done constructively, as this review has been. There's never a perfect time in Local Government for this and I want to thank all those officers and Members who participated to ensure we got the most we could out of an exercise that will help shape the kind of council we want to be going forward.

The Combined Authority is now up and running and by the time we meet, it's Scrutiny and Audit and Governance Committees will have had their first meetings, following the initial meetings of the Combined Authority itself. This mirrors the arrangements we have here where councillors can look into the processes behind how decisions are taken in ensuring public money is being spent appropriately and offering value for money.

Also, that scrutiny is playing its part in looking at how the Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) is exercising its powers and decision making around Police and Fire responsibilities, and holding the soon to be elected Mayor to account. For York residents to feel the MCA is working for them and is relevant, these responsibilities must be taken seriously and not be seen as secondary to those same responsibilities on each constituent council.

I continue to live in hope, as previously indicated, this agenda item will soon be scrapped and time given over to items we should be discussing, when the Leader is well able to cover these important issues in her own report.

Cllr Kilbane, Deputy Leader
13 March 2024