

Report of the Chair of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee (March 2026)

1. I'd like to start by thanking members of the Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy Task and Finish Group and officers for their work on this which led to a report being presented to Executive earlier this month and the group's recommendations being accepted. One of the recommendations was that the Task and Finish Group's work should continue in the new municipal year and I'm grateful to the colleagues who have volunteered to be involved.
2. Another recommendation was for a standing Task and Finish Group to be established to review the financial challenges within Adult Social Care. I'd like to thank colleagues who have volunteered to take part in this important piece of work.
3. A number of other Task and Finish Group suggestions are in the pipeline and I look forward to these coming to fruition.
4. One of the features of the new way of working in Scrutiny is bi-monthly briefing sessions for members who are not on the Executive. These sessions began in October and have been well-received by members. There is a forward plan of briefing topics which can be flexed as necessary to accommodate any time-sensitive issues.
5. The Scrutiny Review Working Group continues to meet to oversee the implementation of the new Scrutiny arrangements and at our most recent meeting we discussed ways in which colleagues' feedback can be gathered on the first six months of operation. We also discussed the potential content and format of an Annual Scrutiny Report, which all being well will come to Full Council in July.
6. Work is underway to establish a formal process to centrally log recommendations arising from Scrutiny discussions and Task and Finish Group work, so that there is more visibility of these recommendations and a formal process to monitor actions arising.

7. There remain some challenges to address, such as ensuring that Scrutiny is sighted on forthcoming decisions in good time to enable pre-decision scrutiny to be undertaken wherever possible. When items appear on the Forward Plan with barely a month's notice it's difficult if not impossible for Scrutiny to be engaged. There is a recognition from officers that this needs to be addressed.

Corporate Scrutiny Committee

8. At its 10 November meeting the Committee considered the Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvements Report for the period April 2024 to March 2025 and discussed a number of aspects of performance. Members' views were sought on the findings of the audit of the council's Climate Change Programme and actions arising and it was agreed that this issue would be revisited in autumn 2026. Members' views were sought on a refreshed approach to monitoring implementation of council motions and it was agreed that the Chief Strategy Officer would liaise with the Chair and Vice-Chair on changes to the process. Members reviewed the schedule of petitions and made a number of suggestions, such as clarifying the identity of the officer responsible for ensuring that each petition is appropriately considered.
9. At its 19 January meeting the committee approved the report and recommendations of the Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan Task and Finish Group, with one minor amendment made.
10. At its 2 March meeting the Committee was asked to comment on the delivery of the Business Sustainability Programme in York and suggest improvements for any future schemes. Members made a number of suggestions as to how the positive impacts of the programme can be better understood and demonstrated. Members' views were sought on a draft scrutiny recommendation tracker template.

Place Scrutiny Committee

11. At its 25 November meeting the Committee was asked to provide feedback on the proposed scope of a study designed to identify options for a sustainable long-term replacement for the Dial and Ride community transport service. A number of suggestions were made as to how the scope could be amended, and members recommended that this area of work be prioritised. Members' views were sought to help inform the development of the Electric Vehicle (EV) Strategy 2026-2030. There was an in-depth discussion covering a range of issues and a number of recommendations were agreed including that on-street EV charging be explored in any review of the strategy and that there should be a focus on ensuring equitable access to EV charging across the city.
12. At its 26 January meeting the Committee's views were sought on the proposed Asset Management Strategy 2026 to 2031. A number of recommendations were made including an action for officers to share with members details of council assets in each ward.
13. At the time of writing the 24 March meeting has not yet taken place, but members' views will be sought on potential options and considerations associated with the Rougier Route project following recent public consultation and members will receive an update on the council's Local Transport Strategy.

People Scrutiny Committee

14. At its 3 December meeting the Committee received an update on the roll-out of the York Hungry Minds Free School Meal Pilot and members expressed support for this work and the work being done under the School Poverty Framework. Members also discussed an update report on Early Years and Childcare Reforms. Members' views were sought on a draft Housing Tenancy Strategy and Policy and a number of issues were raised in the discussion for officers' consideration. There was support for the proposed approach and for the development of a Rent Setting and Service Charges Policy.

15. The meeting scheduled for 10 February was postponed until 17 March. At the time of writing this report the meeting has not yet taken place, but members' views will be sought on actions arising from the CQC Local Authority Assessment of adult social care, a draft Carers Strategy and options for changes to be made to the approach to ward funding allocation.