



**Councillor Steve Shaw-Wright – Chair of Scrutiny Committee**  
**Update to Council – 13 December 2022**

The Scrutiny Committee has met twice since the update given at the last meeting of the Council in September 2022; the meetings took place on 27 October and 24 November 2022.

**The following items were on the agenda for the meeting on 27 October 2022**

**North Yorkshire Safeguarding Adults and Children Boards Annual Reports 2020-21**

Members were asked to note the content of the Annual Report for the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Adults Board (NYSAB), and the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NYSCP) Independent Scrutineers Annual Report 2020-2021.

It was noted that a Section 11 and governance audit had been developed with the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership, City of York Safeguarding Adults Board and Safeguarding Children's Partnership; and there had been a review of the guidance which had been written for responding to concerns about Persons in a Position of trust (PiPoT). The Committee were informed that over the year of 2020-21, 3456 safeguarding concerns had been received, this showed a decrease of 23% from the previous year.

The Committee heard that the NYSCP was a statutory body, led by an Executive which carried co-ordination and accountability responsibilities under the 4 Priorities: a safe life, a happy family life, a healthy life: and achieving in life. It was noted that the Independent Scrutineers Annual report had identified that there were children and young people with special educational needs who required additional support beyond the resources available, and that there had been an increase in family poverty caused by adults' job uncertainty, leading to a need for more access to free school meals or other practical support.

Members asked a number of questions in relation to the use of acronyms within the report, what was being done to rectify the issue of low attendance at meetings, why there was no inclusion of statistics at a district level, and what actions were being taken to ensure that all carers were Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checked, to ensure that person's suitability to the job position. Finally, in terms of placing children into foster homes, it was queried what involvement the Board had in the process and with whom did the responsibility sit. The officer stated that she would feed back the comments made by the Committee to the NYSCP Executive, and any formal response would be circulated to Members.

## **Update on the Council's Void Property Portfolio**

Members received an update on the current position in respect of void properties within the Council's residential property portfolio. It was explained that Selby District Council (SDC) currently owned circa 3,000 domestic properties across the district: with significant

stock concentrations around the three main towns of Selby, Sherburn in Elmet and Tadcaster.

The Committee were informed that there were three categories of voids, a standard void, a major void, and lastly, a refurbishment, and it was explained what the level of works would be required at each category and the target for completion of those works, to bring the property back into use. It was highlighted that an increasing number of properties returned to the Council had started to fall into the refurbishment voids category.

The Committee was informed that the Council currently had 87 void properties awaiting works, 12 completed voids ready for re-letting to prospective tenants, 1 completed void required for the resettlement programme, 2 specialist void properties being held for specialist adaptations: and 2 voids removed from the housing stock pending possible demolition and re-development.

In terms of the Council's Key Performance Indicator's (KPI's), Members noted that at the end of quarter one of 2022-23, performance against all KPI's was significantly ahead of target and comparable to other providers in the sector; and the trend in performance had been one of improvement.

The Committee raised concerns regarding the length of time that some properties were perceived to be empty with no visible works being undertaken. Members stated that they understood that the properties had to be brought up to a particular standard but felt that the work must be completed at a quicker pace to provide high quality, safe and affordable homes for people within the district who needed them. The officer concurred with Members and advised that officers were focussed on refurbishing the void properties as swiftly as possible, and that this was a key delivery ambition for the Council.

Finally, a Member queried what works were currently being undertaken at the Micklegate car park in Selby, in terms of the repairs required to the external lighting and the bollards which had been knocked down, and in relation to the Council's refurbishment plans for the districts car parks, at what stage were the team at with this work. The officer advised that he would investigate the issue and circulate a response.

## **The following items were on the agenda for 24 November 2022**

### **Parking Enforcement in the Selby District**

The Senior Traffic Management and Parking Engineer at North Yorkshire County Council attended the meeting remotely via Teams, to discuss the issue of on-street parking within the district, however due to technical difficulties the officer could not be heard by the Councillors in the Council Chamber; therefore, the item was abandoned

## **Corporate Performance Report Q1, 2022-23**

The Committee were asked to consider and comment on the performance information presented to them for Quarter 1, 2022-23. Officers summarised progress in Quarter 1, with 70% of KPIs reported showing improvement over the longer term or having maintained 100% performance, and 78% of KPIs reported were on target, with 9% of KPIs within acceptable tolerances.

The Chair queried what the projected performance figures were expected to look like for the Council up to Vesting Day in March 2023. The officer confirmed that there was significant pressure in terms of resources, with a number of vacant posts and significant time taken out of the normal working day for officers to contribute to the numerous local government review (LGR) workstreams. However, services continued to focus on Council priorities such as those presented in the report. The officer stated that it was hoped that current staffing levels would at least be maintained for the remaining period left for Selby District Council.

Queries were raised in relation to the performance of Stage 2 corporate complaints response times and the average days staff sickness figures. The officer explained that the number of Stage 2 complaints was so small, that it took just one complaint not to meet the target response date to distort the final figures. In terms of the rise in the sickness figures, it was explained that as all staff had worked from home during the Covid lockdowns, the sickness figures had to some extent been masked, and during this period staff lost immunity so were consequently susceptible to more infections at present. Furthermore, absence due to Covid infections were no longer excluded from reporting. However, Members were assured that sickness absence was being actively managed.

Members requested an update on the Selby Local Plan consultation which had ended in October 2022, the Planning Policy Manager explained that the team were currently reviewing comments and were on track to present a report to Executive in February 2023 on the next steps for the Local Plan.

In relation to Empty Homes and the part funded programme by Homes England to acquire 10 empty homes, the Committee queried if work to identify further opportunities to increase the Council's affordable housing portfolio had enabled SDC to secure any properties; and if there was a timeframe for how long the Council spent in negotiations for a particular property.

### **Section 106 Agreements and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Monies**

The Planning Policy Manager provided an update on the Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) 2020-21. The officer explained that the IFS was an annual report which provided a summary of all developer contributions relating to Section 106 agreements (S106) and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for a given financial year.

Discussion took place around the significant S106 commuted sums that the Council was currently holding for the development or acquisition of off-site affordable housing, and the 'backstop' date by which the funds must be expended, or the monies returned to the relevant developer. In response to a query regarding whether the S106 monies could be spent in the Selby District after Vesting Day in 2023, it was confirmed that the S106 monies could be used within Selby District as this was specified in the relevant legal

agreements, however the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) could not and would therefore transfer over to North Yorkshire Council on the 1 April 2023. Discussions were ongoing in relation to whether monies would be ring fenced to the area in which they were collected.

### **Work Programme 2022-23**

Members agreed to the cancellation of the provisional date held in the Committee Calendar for Scrutiny Committee on the 15 December 2022.

**Future Meetings:** The next meeting of the Committee will be on 19 January 2023.

**Councillor Steve Shaw-Wright, Chair - Scrutiny Committee**