

Scrutiny Committee

Annual Report 2022-23

Introduction by Councillor Steve Shaw-Wright, Chair of Scrutiny Committee 2022-23



I am pleased to present the Scrutiny Committee's Annual Report 2022-23, which sets out the work undertaken by the Committee over the course of the 2022-23 municipal year.

The Committee met seven times in 2022-23 and considered a range of different issues, details of which are set out later in Appendix A.

I would like to express my thanks to my fellow members of the Committee for their support and continued hard work through 2022-23.

Over the years of Selby District Council's existence many people have contributed to the work and success of the Scrutiny Committee, including officers and external partner organisations. I would like to put on record my thanks to all of them.

The Scrutiny Committee

The Scrutiny Committee membership comprised the following members in 2022-23:

Conservative	Labour	Independent
A Lee	S Shaw-Wright (Chair)	J McCartney
J Chilvers	W Nichols (Vice Chair)	
R Sweeting		
K Ellis		
Substitutes		
J Mackman	P Welch	M McCartney
G Ashton	R Packham	

The Role of the Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny was introduced by the Local Government Act 2000.

Selby District Council operates a Leader and Executive model, where the Executive is responsible for most day-to-day decisions. The role of the Scrutiny Committee is to scrutinise decisions and performance and to hold the Leader and Executive to account.

Scrutiny's main roles are:

- To scrutinise the performance of the Council and that of its partner organisations and other agencies delivering services within the Selby District.
- To exercise the Council's statutory obligations and powers in relation to Scrutiny.
- Exercise the right of call-in of decisions and recommendations made, but not yet implemented.
- To issue reports and make recommendations, where appropriate, and in relation to any matters listed above, for consideration by the Council, Executive or the relevant Committee of the Council.

2022-23 Work Programme

A summary of the Committee's work over the last year is set out below.

Conclusion

The Scrutiny Committee fulfilled its role through its work programme in 2022-23.

Councillor Steve Shaw-Wright
Chair of the Scrutiny Committee 2022-23



Date of Meeting	Topic	Discussion and Decision
30 June 2022	Update on Leisure Services Provision (Verbal) Annual Report 2021-22	Members received a verbal update on the provision of leisure services, mainly covering the period January to March 2022. Members asked questions on several issues, including health and fitness memberships, the use of the leisure centre, fitness class attendance, fee levels and income, the effect of inflation and increased energy prices, staff pay and training for safety roles such as lifeguards. Officers explained that the use of the leisure centres for fitness classes and memberships had increased, which had improved the income levels, but these were not at profit levels yet. The repayment of the subsidy given due to the pandemic was expected at the end of Quarter 1 2022-23; as well as footfall the effects of inflation and increases in energy costs had impacted the financial position of leisure services. Public confidence in leisure services was still damaged due to the pandemic. It was further explained that Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles (IHL) were having trouble recruiting the number of lifeguards required due to the rates of pay and role requirements. Members noted that this was an issue being experienced not just in the Selby District but around the country. The Committee noted the update. Members approved the Annual Report for 2021-22 and were asked
		to make any comments or suggestions as to how the format of the Committee's Annual Report could be improved for future years.
	Work Programme 2022-23	The Committee considered the 2022-23 work programme as presented in the agenda. Members agreed that going forward, items of priority for consideration were Covid-19 in Selby district

	and housing voids.
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North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner	The North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) was welcomed to the meeting and gave an update on her role and the work of the police and fire services in the county. The Committee discussed numerous issues with the PFCC, who gave updates on her recent work such as the development of the strategic Police and Crime Plan and Fire Plans, her focus on tackling the root causes of crime, precept consultations, a new victims centre in York, road safety, violence against women and girls and child protection. Members asked the PFCC questions about the provision of fire services in Selby, dealing with gypsies and travellers, neighbourhood policing, speed limits in the district, cross border drug dealing 'county lines', the provision of night Marshalls in Selby town and the waiting times and efficiency of both the 999 and 101 phone services.
Financial Results and Budget Exceptions Report Q4 - 2021-22	Members were asked to consider and comment on the Council's financial and budget exceptions for Quarter 4 of the 2021-22 year. It was noted that after carry-forwards of £1,880.2k the full year revenue outturn in the general fund was a surplus of (£1,619k) driven primarily by favourable variances across a number of income streams. In the HRA, full year revenue outturn after carry-forwards of £18.6k was a (£645k) surplus for the HRA, with lower borrowing costs and bad debt provision offset by lower rents. The Committee were informed that the General Fund planned savings were £2k short of the (£184k) target. The £195k saving in the Housing Revenue Account for the housing system was not achieved this year as it was predicated on the implementation of

	phase 2 of the housing system which had been further delayed to next financial year. Officers explained that the capital programme was underspent by (£1,243k) at the year end, with £500k related to the General Fund. Members asked a number of questions and expressed some concerns in relation to budget carry forwards and their uses, P4G project delivery, the Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) and use of the new housing software. Officers explained that it had continued to be a difficult two years and as a result a significant amount of financial contingency had been made to protect against any issues caused by Covid-19 or Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). The Committee considered and noted the report.
Treasury Management - Quarterly Update Q4 - 2021-22	The Committee heard that on average the Council's investments held in the NYCC investment pool totalled £82.11m over the year, at an average rate of 0.24% and earned interest of £201k (£136k allocated to the General Fund; £65k allocated to the HRA), which was £83k above the total annual budget. This exceeded the Q3 estimated return of £159k by £42k, an upturn in performance driven by the recent increases in Bank of England Base rate. Members noted that in addition to investments held in the pool, the council had £5.46m invested in property funds as at 31 March 2022. The funds achieved 3.46% revenue return and 17.39% capital gain over the course of the year. This resulted in revenue income of £173.0k to the end of Q4 and an 'unrealised' capital gain of £809.0k for the year. The funds were long term investments and changes in capital values were realised when the units in the funds were sold. The Committee acknowledged that long-term borrowing totalled £52.833m at 31 March 2022, (£1.6m relating to the General Fund; £51.233m relating to the HRA) and interest payments of £1.922m

		were paid in 2021/22, a saving of £218k against budget. The Council undertook no short-term borrowing in year. Members were informed that, looking ahead to 2022/23, investment returns were expected to continue to rise due to the recent increases in Bank Base Rate. Members noted the content of the report.
29 September 2022	Update on Leisure Services Provision	Members were provided with an update on the provision of leisure services, mainly covering the period April to August 2022. Members asked several questions to include increased energy prices, the reasons why gym memberships and attendance at the leisure centre had not returned to pre pandemic levels, and staff retention and pay. It was explained that increases in energy costs had impacted the financial position of leisure services, and that customer confidence in leisure services remained low due to the pandemic and the nature of leisure centres, where people were in close proximity to other users. Members noted the update.
	Corporate Performance Report Quarter 4, 2021-22	Members noted the performance information presented to them for Quarter 4 2021-22, which provided a progress update on delivery of the Council Plan 2020-2030. Officers summarised progress in Quarter 4, with 54% 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. Discussion took place regarding the Councils housing stock classed as void and the length of time taken to refurbish and re-let some properties. Officers explained that there had been delays because of the pandemic, and it was often found that when the Council received properties back from tenancies an increasing number of the properties needed a full refurbishment, which took

	longer. Members also noted that there had been significant pressure on Trade resources.
Financial Results and Budget Exceptions - Quarter 1, 2022-23	Members noted that at the end of Quarter 1, current estimated full year revenue outturn estimates indicated surpluses of (£382k) for the General Fund (GF) and a £28k deficit for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) before the pay award. It was further noted that should the pay award offer which was currently under consideration by the unions be accepted, it was anticipated that this would reduce the GF surplus to (£45k) and increase the HRA deficit to £184k. Officers explained that the main forecasted variances against the HRA deficit were rent collection forecasts which to date showed a £102k shortfall. The main driver being that void rates were higher than budget which were driven by the assumptions in the business plan. Members heard that this was mainly due to the poor condition the properties were left in when vacated and the resource available to bring them back in to use. The cost-of-living increases had also started to impact on collection rates, but this would be reviewed again at quarter 2 when more data was available for comparison. The Committee considered and noted the report.
Treasury Management - Monitoring Report - Quarter 1, 2022-23	Members were asked to consider the Council's borrowing and investment activity (Treasury Management) for the period 1 April 2022 to 30 June 2022 and presented performance against the Prudential Indicators. Officers explained that on average the Council's investments held in the North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) Investment pool totalled £83.5m over the quarter at an average rate of 0.78% and earned interest of £161.7k (£116.6k allocated to the General Fund; £45.0k allocated to the HRA) which was £123.5k above the year-to-date budget.

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
	Work Programme	Members agreed that they wished to confirm the provisional date of Thursday 27 October 2022 as the date of the next Scrutiny Committee and requested that an officer from parking enforcement at North Yorkshire County Council be invited to attend to discuss the serious issue of on-street parking within the district. Members noted the work programme.
		Members were informed that current performance trends indicated that forecast returns for the year could be in the region of £871.8k (£628.9k GF, £243.0k HRA) a total budget surplus of £719.4k. For the General Fund, any interest earned above a £350k threshold would be transferred to the Contingency Reserve. This figure was currently forecast to be £278.9k. Members noted that in addition to investments held in the pool, the council has £5.63m invested in property funds as at 30 June 2022. The funds have achieved a 2.93% revenue return and 3.13% capital gain over the course of the quarter. This resulted in revenue income of £40.5k to the end of Q1 and an 'unrealised' capital gain of £170.8k. The funds were long term investments and changes in capital values were realised when the units in the funds were sold. The Committee acknowledged that long-term borrowing totalled £52.833m at 30 June 2022, (£1.6m relating to the General Fund; £51.233m relating to the HRA), and interest payments of £1.917m were forecast to be paid in 2022-23, a saving of £59k against budget. The Council had no plans for any short-term borrowing for the year. The Committee considered and noted the content of the report.

North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NYSCP) Independent Scrutineers Annual Report 2020-2021.

The Committee heard 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.
Update on the Council's Void Property Portfolio	Members received a comprehensive 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, and each category was explained. The Committee noted 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 (KPR'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.
	Work Programme	The Committee noted the 2022-23 work programme as presented in the agenda.
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. 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. 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 officer explained that the Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) 2020-21was 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	The Committee considered the 2021-22 work programme. Members agreed to the cancellation of the provisional date held in the Committee Calendar for Scrutiny Committee on the 15 December 2022.
19 January 2023	North Yorkshire Safeguarding Adults and Children Boards Annual Reports 2021-22	The Committee heard that the aim for the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Adults Board (NYSAB) was to reinforce the message that keeping people safe in our communities during a pandemic was everyone's business. Other priorities for the NYSAB included homelessness, preparing for the introduction of the Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS), changes in the Integrated Care Systems (ICS), the Local Government Re-organisation (LGR); and creating a culture of shared learning to enable partner agencies to continue to work together to keep adults in North Yorkshire safe from harm, abuse and neglect. In respect of the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NYSCP) Independent Scrutineers Annual Report, the Committee were informed that the priorities moving forward were focussed on the development of the NYSCP website to support the broader focus on the BYINY priorities, access to the information, and seeking to develop the way feedback from frontline practice shaped the work of the group.

	In terms of the Selby Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSP), it had been agreed that the local priorities for further development would be domestic abuse and both child and adult exploitation, predominantly around online safety. Members noted the two Annual Reports.
Update on Leisure Services Provision	Members noted the quarterly update on the provision of leisure services, covering the period April to December 2022. It was confirmed that there had been a positive trend in terms of gym membership and attendance at the leisure centre but that the year on year performance figures did indicate utilisation of the facilities still remained below pre pandemic levels. The figures were attributed to a number of factors to include levels of inflation, utility costs, and households with less disposable money to spend on leisure activities, which all impacted on the service. Members appreciated the difficulties being felt, the Chair stated that the issue of low attendance figures was County wide, and not just at leisure facilities but also at theatres and other facilities where people were in close proximity to other users.
Corporate Performance Report, Q2 – 2022-23	Officers summarised progress in Quarter 2, with 61% of KPIs reported showing improvement over the longer term, and 78% of KPIs reported were on target. A query was raised in relation to the Council's housing revenue account and the additional funding requirements which had been presented to full Council at the meeting held on Tuesday 17 January 2023. A Member commented that they had heard a news bulletin run by Radio York earlier in the afternoon of the meeting. Radio York had reported that Selby District Council were to reduce the amount of money to be spent on housing repairs, while increasing the amount of money spent on Void properties, and it

	was queried if the figures quoted by Radio York were accurate. The officer stated that they would speak with the officers concerned to ensure that the radio station was contacted, and the correct monetary information supplied.
Financial Results and Budget Exceptions, Q2 – 2022-23	The Chair requested that the item be deferred to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.
Treasury Management Monitoring Report, Q2 – 2022-23	The Chair requested that the item be deferred to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.
Director of Public Health	The Director of Public Health asked the Committee to consider and note the content of the 2021-22 Director of Public Health Annual Report: lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic, with the report focusing on the broader experiences of what individuals and communities across North Yorkshire had lived through during the Covid-19 pandemic, the wider impacts felt by communities; and the lessons to be learned from these for the future. Members noted that communications and cascading the messages out to the public had played a key part, and that the mantra had been hands, face, space. The vaccination programme had also played a critical part in moving forward and allowing the freedoms that the public enjoyed today, and that it was not only about protecting communities but also about improving health, the quality of life and having a healthy life expectancy. Members acknowledged that the pandemic had brought out the best qualities in people and that the local community had come together to support each other during the pandemic.

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust - Barlow Common Annual Report 2020-2021 and the Wildlife Habitat Protection Trust - Hambleton Hough Annual Report 2020-2021 The Chair welcomed to the meeting David Powell from the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (YWT) and Martin and Craig Blakey from the Wildlife Habitat Protection Trust (WHPT).

Mr Powell advised Members that he had taken over the management of Barlow Common in April 2022, since that time he had been writing the new ten-year Management Plan, which would come into force from April 2023. Members heard that the new Plan had a more holistic approach to the management at the site which aimed to support and boost some of the species that had been found to be present at Barlow Common. It was noted that the site benefitted from a dedicated group of volunteers who had provided 449 hours of volunteer time in the past ten months.

Members heard that the YWT were working to promote and encourage the re-introduction of school visits as the site was important for educational purposes, along with exploring different funding options to help make better, sustainable use of the visitor centre building.

The Chair stated that he visited Barlow Common regularly and he felt that the site had improved noticeably.

In terms of Hambleton Hough, the Committee were informed that over the past 12 months the WHPT had concentrated its efforts on planting 4000 new trees and putting measures in place to control bracken and undergrowth to allow the new trees to grow and mature unhindered. In April 2022 a large section of Hambleton Hough had been destroyed by fire, however Members were pleased to hear that the site had since been re-planted and restaked. Moving forward the WHPT would be monitoring the site, providing regular maintenance of the woodland to ensure all the paths were clear; and replacing any trees that did not survive the replanting.

	Work Programme	Members felt that Hambleton Hough was a lovely place which local people could reach easily by bicycle, with their families, for a cost-free day out. The Committee agreed that the provisional meeting on the 16 February 2023 be confirmed in the Committee calendar.
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16 February 2023	Financial Results and Budget Exceptions, Q2 – 2022-23	Members noted that at the end of Quarter 2, current estimated full year revenue outturn estimates indicated surpluses of (£371k) for the General Fund (GF) and (£68k) for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA); these figures included the proposed pay award. The capital programme showed an underspend at the end of Quarter 2. The General Fund programme had two projects which had seen delays, these resulted in a £500k in year underspend, with the projects expected to be undertaken in 2023-24. Officers explained that the key forecasted variances were mainly as a result of the return on Council investment income which had performed positively when compared to the budgets for the year. In addition, an expected saving of £195k in the HRA which would have been generated from the implementation of the housing system would now not be achieved in year, due to the timing of the implementation of phase two of the project.
	Treasury Management Monitoring Report, Q2 – 2022-23	Officers explained that on average the Council's investments held in the North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) Investment pool totalled £85.9m over the quarter at an average rate of 1.37% and earned interest of £296.5k. The total interest earned to the end of September 2023 stood at £458.2 (£330.5k allocated to the General Fund; £127.7k allocated to the HRA) which was £382.0k above the year-to-date budget. Members were informed that current performance trends indicated

		that forecast returns for the year could be in the region of £1,189.3k (£857.9k GF, £331.4k HRA) a total budget surplus of £1,036.8k. Members noted that in addition to investments held in the pool, the council had £5.34m invested in property funds as at 30 September 2022. The funds had achieved a 3.08% revenue return and 2.20% capital loss over the course of the year. This resulted in revenue income of £84.5k to the end of Q2 and an 'unrealised' capital loss of £120.2k.
	Work Programme	The Committee noted the 2022-23 work programme as presented in the agenda.
		The following items are due to be considered at the final meeting of the Scrutiny Committee:
23 March 2023	Blue Light Services – Police and Fire Services and Yorkshire Ambulance Service (YAS)	
	Financial Results and Budget Exceptions, Q3 – 2022-23	
	Treasury Management Monitoring Report, Q3 – 2022-23	
	Corporate Performance Report, Q3 – 2022-23	
	Final Annual Report of the Selby District Council Scrutiny Committee 2022-23	

Work Programme	