



### **Councillor Steve Shaw-Wright – Chair of Scrutiny Committee**

The Scrutiny Committee has met twice since the last update to Council in September; on 26 September and 21 November 2019.

#### **26 September 2019**

The work programme was considered and agreed by Members.

Martin Blakey from the Wildlife Habitat Protection Trust and David Craven from Yorkshire Wildlife Trust were present to introduce the annual reports for Barlow Common and Hambleton Hough for 2018-19.

The Committee then received the Leisure Contract Annual Review 2018-19. The Committee asked Officers a number of questions about external funding, sporting activity and youth engagement. The Committee also talked about the visits to the leisure centres and the importance of ensuring there was footfall in the leisure centres throughout the day.

Members received a report about Local Planning Authority (LPA's) powers to issue Section 215 Notices and discussed the practical implications and effectiveness of doing so. The Committee expressed their frustrations in relation to recurring enforcement issues; there was a perceived lack of action on such cases. Officers acknowledged that there were ongoing problems with some cases, but that enforcement action was taken and that the national guidance encouraged resolution in such matters through the submission of planning applications and within the planning process. With regards to planning enforcement, improvements had been made but it was acknowledged that there was still work to do. The Executive Member for Place Shaping was also in attendance and explained that the number of planning applications submitted to the Council for consideration had grown exponentially over the past few years, and as such, these applications generated more complaints and enforcement issues.

Members considered the draft version of the HRA Business Plan and its accompanying Action Plan 2020-2025. Members expressed concerns around maintenance of homes to a decent homes standard, and emphasised the importance of recruiting a maintenance workforce that could address the work that needed doing. The Committee asked a number of questions about the housing service, including its sustainability, the number of Council homes lost each year to Right to Buy, and the use of sustainable and renewable materials.

The Committee received and discussed the quarterly Corporate Performance report for Quarter 1. Officers were asked to supply the Committee with a copy of the minutes from a sub-regional meeting aimed at connecting areas of deprivation (including Flaxley Road and Abbots Road) with employment opportunities, as mentioned in the performance monitoring report.

Members then considered the financial results and budget exceptions report to 30 June 2019. The Committee asked for further information about the industrial units for rent as mentioned in the report, specifically where they were and their size, as well as the negotiations on the remaining lease time left on the Market Cross site, where the Contact Centre were currently based but would be vacating shortly.

Lastly, Members were asked to consider and comment on the treasury management report for Quarter 1.

## **21 November 2019**

The work programme was considered and agreed by Members.

Next the Committee welcomed Dr Lincoln Sargeant, Director of Public Health for North Yorkshire, who was presenting his annual report. The Committee were shown the areas of deprivation in North Yorkshire with the ward of Selby West being highlighted. Members received information on healthy life expectancy, elements at the heart of poverty and deprivation such as employment, skills, income, education, crime and living environment, food banks, levels of poverty and the action being taken to tackle such issues. The Director of Public Health emphasised the importance of understanding that people were proud of where they came from, and therefore investment and regeneration was needed to enable them to stay in the area. Concerns were raised at the perceived lack of co-ordination between agencies, and also in respect of the lack of bus services in rural locations.

The Committee then considered and discussed the role and function of the Council's Community Engagement Forums. Some of the CEF Chairs and both Development Officers from AVS and Groundwork were in attendance for this item, as well as a representative from NYCC Highways who frequently attended CEF meetings. Members discussed improving attendance at forum meetings, how the funding was apportioned across the CEF areas (due to some areas being more deprived than others), and how the CEF areas had been divided up.

In relation to the police co-location at the Civic Centre, Members noted that the first six months have seen a relatively smooth transition with no formal complaints from the public, and the Police and the Council had strengthened their working relationship. The Committee raised their concerns regarding confidentiality, and were pleased to note that two offices had been made available to the Police for interviews. The location of the reception staff was of particular concern to Members.

An update was provided on the consultation responses received on the draft Council Plan 2030 to date. It was confirmed that the final details of how the Council would deliver on the priorities would be set out in three year delivery plans, with the first to be published in March 2020. Members supported the draft Plan as a basis for future delivery, and welcomed the new focus on the environment and hoped the recommendations from the Low Carbon Working Group would provide more specific, strong actions for delivery of the green agenda. Members were also keen that the work around economic growth should prioritise sustainability, which the new Local Plan would help with, and that a focus on wellbeing was addressed. Discussion took place on encouraging and supporting shops in Selby, with ideas around the pedestrianisation of the town centre being raised, as well as arguments for and against the possibility of introducing a one way traffic system around Selby town centre to alleviate traffic pressures.

The Committee also received and discussed the quarter 2 updates for Corporate Performance and Treasury Management.

**Future Meetings:** The next meeting of the Committee will be on **23 January 2020**.

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