

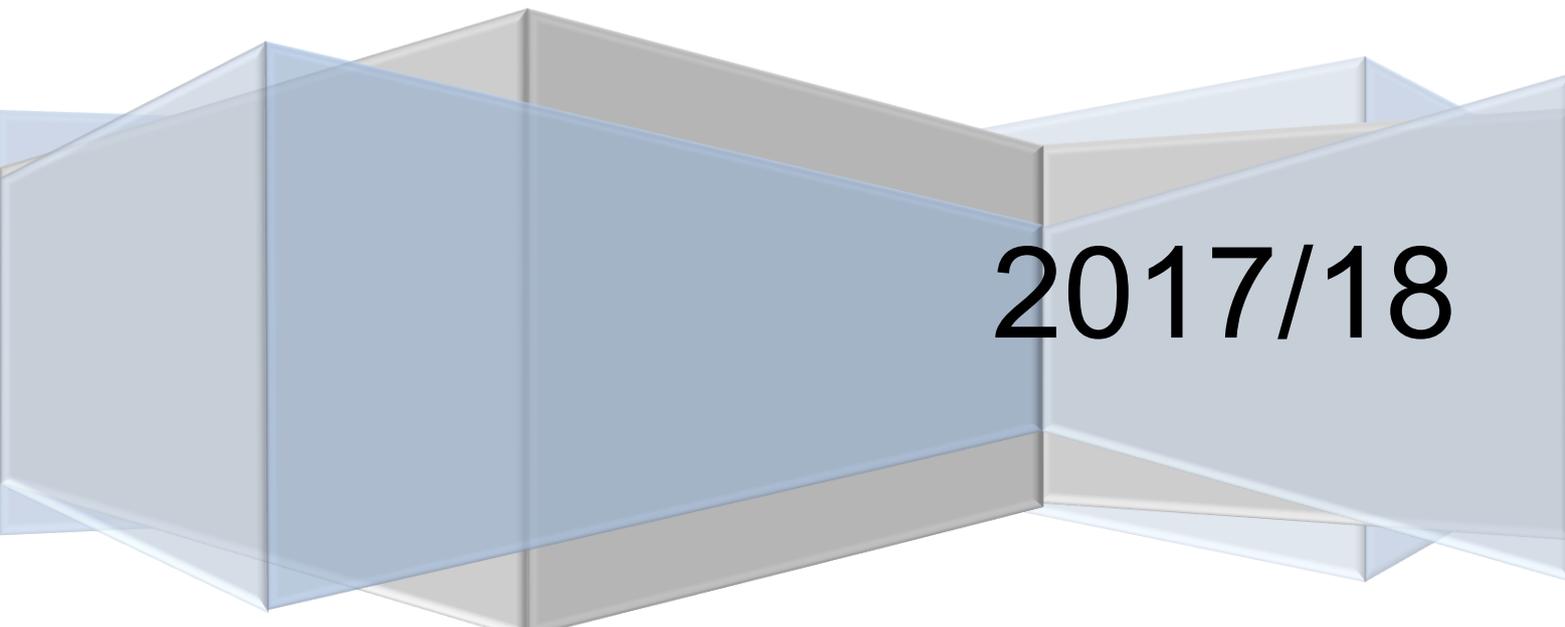


North Yorkshire
County Council

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report

**A review of the work of overview and
scrutiny in 2017/18 and looking ahead to
work that will be done in 2018/19**

**Cllr Jim Clark, Chairman of the NYCC Scrutiny
Board and Daniel Harry, Democratic Services and
Scrutiny Manager**



2017/18

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2017/18

Foreword by Cllr Jim Clark - Chairman of Scrutiny Board

As Chairman of the Scrutiny Board, I am pleased to introduce the 2017/18 Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report. This report provides a summary of and insight into the work that has been done over the past year and what work will be done over the next 12 months. It also offers an opportunity to reflect on overview and scrutiny practice and ensure that the highest standards are maintained.



The findings of the Communities and Local Government (CLG) Committee's inquiry into whether overview and scrutiny arrangements are working effectively, and an independent inspection report into concerns of financial mismanagement at Northamptonshire County Council, gave us cause to reflect upon our own arrangements. The taxpaying public must have confidence that North Yorkshire County Council has the right culture, governance and processes to make robust decisions.

The CLG inquiry cited a number of high profile cases where short comings in overview and scrutiny arrangements had been apparent, such as child sexual exploitation in Rotherham, high mortality rates at Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust and governance failings in Tower Hamlets. The inspection of Northamptonshire County Council underlined the importance of adequate scrutiny by councillors, and strong processes that ensure the right information is made available to managers and councillors to underpin service management and robust spending decisions.

With these events in mind, when I look back over the past year I believe the Members of the overview and scrutiny committees and officers supporting them have worked hard to create a culture where transparency, involvement and accountability are welcomed and where challenge is seen as a vital and positive part of improving outcomes.

The overview and scrutiny committees have been busy this year working on a broad range of issues affecting the Council, its services and local people. Whilst the bulk of this work has been planned for some time, a significant amount has, quite rightly, continued to be reactive as services in the county undergo a period of change and uncertainty.

To finish, I would like to thank all those Members, co-opted committee members, officers and partners that have engaged in and contributed to Overview and Scrutiny over the past 12 months.

I commend the report to Council.

What is Overview and Scrutiny?

The Local Government Act 2000 first introduced the requirement for every local authority to include provision for at least one overview and scrutiny committee.

The overview and scrutiny function is a key element of the County Council's governance arrangements and decision making process.

Although not a decision-making body, overview and scrutiny is at its most effective when it grasps the potential to influence and inform decisions made by both the Council and partner bodies affecting the County.

What does it aim to do?

Scrutiny aims to contribute to the Council's corporate outcomes in many ways, including:

- Enabling Councillors to become directly involved in the development of: policy and strategy; consultation and public engagement planning; and the performance management of the Council.
- Keeping Councillors and the public informed of key issues, priorities and initiatives.
- Enabling direct engagement with the people of North Yorkshire.
- Acting as a critical friend and providing Executive Members and senior officers with a non-partisan forum in which to test out ideas, approaches and gain feedback and suggestions.
- Providing a structure, through the call-in process, for scrutinising specific decisions of the Executive.
- Scrutinising issues of public concern beyond the remit of the Council.

What does it done over the past year?

The five thematic overview and scrutiny committees have looked at and responded to a wide range of issues. The key ones are outlined below:

Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Focusing in the last 12 months on:

- Roll out of digital self-service, with particular attention to what measures have been put in place to ensure that people who are unable to access ICT are still able to get access to the services that they need.
- Progress with the North Yorkshire Refugee Resettlement Programme and the package of housing, education, health and employment services that is coordinated by the Council
- A review of the Council's Equality Objectives 2016/2020, with an outline of the work that is underway across all departments to promote equality and diversity and of the move towards greater co-design, drawing upon people's experiences to enable more informed decisions to be made about service development
- The reconfigured library services and the 33 Council run libraries that were transitioned to varying levels of community responsibility as of April 2017

- Scrutiny of the first 100 days of the Parish Portal, identifying progress made and areas for improvement
- A review of reoffending amongst young people and adults in North Yorkshire, what interventions are in place to reduce reoffending and how successful they are? This has included fact finding visits to prisons for young people and adults.

Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Focusing in the last 12 months on:

- A review of the activity and effectiveness of, and the partnership commitment towards, the North Yorkshire Adults Safeguarding Board.
- Prevent, Reduce and Delay in the context of the Health and Adult Services (HAS) Operating Model, with a particular focus on Strength Based Assessments
- Dementia Strategy.
- How the HAS directorate has met, and continues to meet, its statutory responsibilities to provide an Advocacy Service.
- A review of the evidence to supports the assertion that we have grounds to be confident that North Yorkshire care providers, particularly those who operate residential establishments, are satisfactorily meeting appropriate quality standards and requirements.
- Understanding the local market and wider market issues in the context of providing social care.
- An assessment of local approach, and the practice and support for, the various types of the Intermediate Care Service in North Yorkshire: Home-based intermediate care; Reablement; Bed based intermediate care - sometimes described as 'step up' and 'step down'; and Crisis response.

Young Peoples Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Focusing in the last 12 months on:

- Closing the Gap: Supporting Vulnerable Learners, with a particular focus on use of the Pupil Premium.
- Evaluating North Yorkshire's innovative careers guidance project, "Progression for Success".
- Exclusions from School – how pupils and parents are supported; what can be done to reduce the rate of pupil exclusions
- Safeguarding - how do we ensure the safety of Children and Young People in North Yorkshire.
- How are we ensuring North Yorkshire schools are in the right place relative to where children and families live, providing high quality education and facilities which keep young people safe and inspire them to learn.
- How school admissions work from formal consultation on the admissions policy, the relationship we have with schools, and the allocations process.
- North Yorkshire's Strategic Plan for SEND provision 0-25.

Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Focusing in the last 12 months on:

- York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership – review of annual report and progress against key milestones and performance measures.
- Review of the Highways Maintenance Contract.
- Review of Highways England's plans for the road network in North Yorkshire, including road safety measures to be put in place on the A19 following the fatalities in 2017
- Rail developments - update report on the rail franchise, Rail North and Transport for the North.
- Preparing for Brexit including ways to support the local economy, examining the Government's Industrial Strategy, North Yorkshire County Council's Plan for Economic Growth and the work of the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership to assist in this regard.
- Update on the new apprenticeship levy introduced from April 2017.
- Adult Learning and Skills Service post inspection action plan

Scrutiny of Health Committee

Focusing in the last 12 months on:

- The reconfiguration of mental health services in the county and scrutiny of plans for a new mental health in-patient facility at Haxby Road in York, to replace the Bootham Park Hospital, the now paused development of a new mental health in-patient facility at Cardale Park in Harrogate, and the closure of the existing mental health in-patient wards at the Friarage in Northallerton.
- The development of a checklist that enables the committee to assess whether proposals for changes to mental health services are in line with local and national expectations and standards for what a good mental health service should be.
- A review of the proposed reconfiguration of health services at the Friarage Hospital in Northallerton, in response to workforce shortages in anaesthesia and emergency medicine and the links between the Friarage, James Cook and Darlington Memorial Hospitals.
- The development of Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships and Accountable Care Systems in Yorkshire and Humber and the North East and Cumbria, in particular governance arrangements and the risks to health and care services in North Yorkshire.
- Ongoing review of the long term sustainability of smaller community hospitals and in-patients units, and scrutiny of proposed closures of sites and of the role of NHS Property Services.
- Scrutiny of the way in which NHS dental treatment is commissioned in the county by NHS England (Yorkshire and Humber).

In-depth reviews

Extended pieces of overview and scrutiny can be undertaken, where a more in-depth analysis of the issues is required. Over the past 12 months, a number of these have been undertaken. Examples include:

Vehicle activated speed signs

In March 2018 the Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee commenced a task group review of the County Council's policy on vehicle activated speed signs. The purpose is to consider whether the County Council should allow parish councils to purchase, install and maintain their own speed matrix signs on a permanent basis. The task group is expected to report its findings to the Committee in July 2018.

Health and Social Care Integration: Joint Scrutiny

Workforce

A joint task group of the Scrutiny of Health and Care and Independence Scrutiny Committees reviewed workforce issues, especially shortages in recruitment and retention, in the context of health and social care integration. The group's findings mirrored those of a more recent National Audit Office report which concluded that *"The Department of Health and Social Care is not doing enough to support a sustainable social care workforce. The number of people working in care is not meeting the country's growing care demands and unmet care needs are increasing"*.

It is alarming that shortages in key staff across health and social care are becoming the single most significant factor in influencing changes in service delivery, particularly in the NHS.

The group came forward with a series of recommendations for agencies and partners - particularly in respect of training needs, improving the poor image of working in the sector, and wider recruitment options. In making these recommendations, it is recognised that there is already a great deal of work underway and that long term planning of the health and social care workforce is often impeded by the need to respond to immediate shortages in staff that threaten the sustainability of services. Without a move away from traditional roles and traditional workforce training, however, the problems that are currently being experienced will only worsen.

The work of the Sub-Committee was recognised by all parties to have been balanced, inclusive and measured in its approach, with the arising recommendations gaining widespread support.

On behalf of the two scrutiny committees, I have invited the Secretary of State for Health to consider the findings and act upon the recommendations. This correspondence has also been made available to the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Care and Mental Health), the Chair of the Commons Select Committee on Health, the Shadow Secretary of State for Health, and North Yorkshire's MPs.

The details of the Joint Scrutiny of Health Committee meeting can be found here - <http://democracy.northyorks.gov.uk/committees.aspx?commid=95&meetid=3404>

Evaluating the success of Integration

The task group is to now turn its attention to the wider issues regarding integration of health, social care and related services. Whilst there is a general acceptance at a national and local level that the integration of services is a good thing which will lead to improvements in service delivery, many aspects of what integration means remain unclear, often with little detail about what should be integrated and why. The group wants to:

- Understand what services are being delivered, what is planned, and what the impact of these services has or will be upon patient/service user outcomes.
- Establish whether the potential benefits are being realised in the integrated services are currently delivered.
- Assess whether the current approaches to integrated health and social care services being developed, trailed and implemented are the most appropriate.

A range of information will be sought from stakeholders and user group representative bodies, after which the task group will hold a formal inquiry session in public (akin to a parliamentary select committee) to consider evidence from a chosen range of organisations and individuals. A report outlining conclusions and recommendations will then be agreed for publication later this year.

Other approaches

Overview and scrutiny committees also give detailed consideration to a review of service activity over a number of meetings, using a mixture of methods, without having to embark on what is generally understood to be an in-depth review.

Children's Mental Health

Mental health problems affect about 1 in 10 children and young people. They include depression, anxiety and conduct disorder, and are often a direct response to what is happening in their lives. Members from the Scrutiny of Health and Young Peoples Scrutiny Committees reviewed the support available to young people in North Yorkshire who experience a mental health problem. This group found much to be pleased about in terms of the profile and effectiveness of local services and especially liked the level of ambition around service improvement.

Nationally, it is recognised that there are high numbers of children and young people experiencing emotional and mental health problems, but for whom support is woefully inadequate. The members group commented upon the government's green paper which comes forward with a series of proposals for improving appropriate interventions at a sufficiently early age.

Mental Health

A closed session of the Scrutiny of Health Committee was held in February 2018 to enable a full and frank discussion, with providers and service users, about the development of mental health services for people in North Yorkshire. This has led to the development of a checklist that enables the committee to assess whether proposals for changes to mental health services are in line with local and national expectations and standards for what a good mental health service should be.

Exclusions from School

Permanent exclusion from school is a very critical event in a young person's life; it can also be a distressing experience for a parent. Whilst the percentage of pupils excluded from North Yorkshire's schools represents a very small percentage of the county's school population, for many permanently excluded children getting back into mainstream education will be a major challenge; some stay in alternative provision - most often Pupil Referral Units (PRU) - for the remainder of their school years.

The Young Peoples Overview and Scrutiny Committee held informal sessions with groups of young people who had been excluded and the PRU staff accompanying them. These sessions covered: what those pupils had been excluded for; their reaction to the exclusion; the impact on their family; how and what had changed for them; and how things might be different. Such first-hand information about experiences helped members place in context, and to assess, the action the Children and Young Peoples Service is taking to tackle the prevalence of exclusions in the county and what priority action is needed.

Areas of Continuous improvement identified and tackled

The Scrutiny Board leads discussions about scrutiny best practise this year. Areas where improvement in scrutiny practice will have the most impact have been identified, notably:

Public - more public engagement in meetings and greater public awareness of the outcome of overview and scrutiny work

Examples of Action Undertaken

Greater use over the past year has been made of press releases, and other media such as twitter. Links are increasingly being forged with various and diverse networks. But undoubtedly more remains to be done. Improved targeting of publicity should assist us in this, but sometimes we simply must accept that many subjects are of limited interest to the wider public.

We are also seeing press attendance at more of the public meetings that the Council holds. This is because the BBC has funded 150 "local democracy reporters". This is in response to concerns that the financial pressures upon local media have led to a significant fall in press scrutiny of local authorities.

Outcomes – a greater focus on identifying what the hoped for outcome is for each piece of overview and scrutiny work that is undertaken, with a strong emphasis upon adding value.

Examples of Action Undertaken

Members are being encouraged to make better use of project planning, creating a sharp focus on the outcome of the piece of scrutiny from the outset. The work described earlier - for example on workforce integration and pupil exclusions – tells us that efforts to play a more influential role in policy development are showing promise.

Forward planning – co-ordination of work programmes and use of joint scrutiny to tackle cross cutting issues, such as workforce shortages or integration of health and social care

Examples of Action Undertaken

Committee work programmes have always been reviewed on a regular basis at Scrutiny Board, but over the last year we looked more closely at opportunities for collaborative working – the joint members groups mentioned earlier are an encouraging reflection of this. We have also devoted more attention on which committee is best placed to take the lead on particular issues.

Performance management – investigation of strategic performance issues to see whether there is a need for overview and scrutiny to pursue particular lines of enquiry

Examples of Action Undertaken

Scrutiny Board continues to be briefed on the quarterly performance management report that is considered by the Executive. Also, performance management information will always be an essential part of the evidence base that Committees have before them when scrutinising specific issues and themes. This works well, and evidently assists members to probe topics and reach balanced, well-informed conclusions. Some committees, mainly in briefings, do currently use such information to better inform their workload planning, but the aim is to develop a framework in order to bring forward such information on more regular, timely basis.

Service users – making it easier for service users to express their views at overview and scrutiny and to contribute to work that is undertaken

Examples of Action Undertaken

Participation by service users and stakeholders has always tended to be on a case by case basis. There is no doubt more ought to be done to involve service user representative user groups. This year, however, it was encouraging to see significant input from users and representative groups at meetings of Scrutiny of Health Committee, particularly around the reconfiguration of mental health services.

The Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee is shortly to engage directly with service user representatives to establish how confident can we be that services are person centred; are locally appropriate, and have been planned with individuals to put them and their carers in control and thus to deliver the best outcomes.

Priorities for 2018/19

What we learned from these improvements in practice will be consolidated in our work for the coming year. Each overview and scrutiny committee has a work programme in place that looks 12 months ahead. This work programme is built upon a range of data, information and analysis, including: performance data; inspection reports; national research and policy; consultations and public engagement events; the County Council Plan; and local issues raised by elected members, members of the public or highlighted in the media.

Some of the themes for overview and scrutiny in 2018/19 are summarised below:

- Supported Housing programme savings and the national consultation on supported housing funding.
- Banded Extra Care Charges - Revision of charging scheme in all extra care settings across the county.
- Short Breaks Proposals - Assessment of current review of respite/short term breaks (aiming to offer more to people with dementia but also potential changes to existing services), transport (initially focusing on income collection but will look at charging), charging levels.
- Supported Living Review – savings and possible joint commissioning approach with aligned investment and shared priorities.
- Small Schools -The action being taken to ensure small schools achieve good educational outcomes.
- Supporting Underperforming Schools - especially those in Special Measures. How does the authority address its statutory requirements?
- Early Years Service Across North Yorkshire - Review of Service and challenges
- North Yorkshire's Strategic Plan for SEND provision 0-25
- Collaboration between emergency services - review of progress made with the implementation of plans for collaboration between North Yorkshire Police and North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- Community safety – the Prevent Programme, the North Yorkshire Community Safety Partnership and work to reduce reoffending amongst adults and young people in the county.
- Traded services – scrutiny of governance arrangements and plans for the development of traded services, particularly the Brierley Group
- Electric charge points for electric/hybrid vehicles - the progress of installing electric charge points in the county for electric/hybrid vehicles and to discuss strategies to lever in investment to increase the number of charge points and to promote the use of electric/hybrid vehicles.
- 20mph speed policy.
- York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership – review of annual report and progress against key milestones and performance measures
- Review of the Highways Maintenance Contract.
- Review of Highways England's plans.
- Civil Parking Enforcement - to provide a review of countywide Civil Parking Enforcement in 2016/17 and 2017/18.
- Rural transport - an update on rural bus services and community transport in North Yorkshire.
- Winter Highways Maintenance Policy for rural and urban areas.
- Mental health services – review of proposals for the reconfiguration of mental health services in the county.
- Accountable Care Systems – implementation of new systems for the commissioning and provision of health and social care services in the Yorkshire and Humber and the North East and Cumbria.
- Ambulance response times – impact of changes to the way that health services are provided and the impact of this.

How to find out more about Overview and Scrutiny

Further information on Overview and Scrutiny is available on the North Yorkshire County Council website - <http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/article/23665/Scrutiny>

Or contact the Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager, Daniel Harry
E: daniel.harry@northyorks.gov.uk or T: 01609 533531.

Members of the public are welcome to attend any meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Committee papers are available from the North Yorkshire County Council website as follows - <http://democracy.northyorks.gov.uk/>