

North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership – Executive

8 January 2009

Scrutiny and Local Area Agreement Targets

1. Purpose of report

This report updates the NYSP Executive on the:

- North Yorkshire County Council revised Overview and Scrutiny Guidance;
- ‘North Yorkshire Scrutiny Network’; and
- Scrutiny of the outcomes of the Local Area Agreement (LAA).

2 Background

- 2.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 has given extended powers to overview and scrutiny and an increasing focus on partnership working alongside a duty to cooperate, however guidance on this and a commencement date is still awaited.
- 2.2 In readiness for the commencement of the Act the Overview and Scrutiny Members at North Yorkshire County Council decided to revise scrutiny guidance. The purpose of the revised guide is to provide advice and develop a common understanding for how scrutiny of statutory public sector partners could operate in North Yorkshire when the new powers are enacted. This guidance has been drawn up during the early stages of the new arrangements and may be amended and further developed as the relationship between Overview and Scrutiny and public sector partners develops. The aim is for all parties to help ensure that Overview and Scrutiny is a positive yet challenging experience. It is important that Overview and Scrutiny is regarded as a critical friend from the outset and a “no surprises” way of working is agreed between Overview and Scrutiny and partner organisations.
- 2.3 On the 12 September 2007 the NYSP ‘Combined Steering Group and Local Area Agreement Management Group’ considered a report on North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) Draft Overview and Scrutiny Guidance for Partners. The report sought the views of the partners within the steering group on the content of the Overview and Scrutiny guidance being developed by NYCC.
- 2.4 The guidance and information sheets have now been completed and printed and are available on request from the scrutiny support officer Lorraine Laverton at lorraine.laverton@northyorks.gov.uk or can be viewed on the Overview & Scrutiny page of the NYCC website. The information sheet for external partners is included as ANNEX A to this report.
- 2.5 Several of the partners at the meeting of the combined steering group in September 2007 suggested that it would be a practical way forward for

scrutiny officers from each of the Local Authorities to meet to share ideas and facilitate closer working.

3 'North Yorkshire Scrutiny Network'

3.1 This suggestion led to the first meeting of the 'North Yorkshire Scrutiny Network' which was held on the 11th March 2008 and where it was unanimously agreed that regular meetings of scrutiny officers from across the Local Authorities in North Yorkshire would be worthwhile.

3.2 To date the Network has had three meetings, shared overview and scrutiny work programmes and begun exploring how the overview and scrutiny functions of each Local Authority can work better together.

4 Memorandum of Understanding

4.1 Through discussion at the meetings of the North Yorkshire Scrutiny Network a Memorandum of Understanding (attached at ANNEX B) has been developed. It is seen as recognition of the commitment to work better together and to support and promote effective partnership working between the Districts and County Council in North Yorkshire.

4.2 The principle of the Memorandum of Understanding has been agreed by leading Scrutiny Members and officers at each of the Local Authorities and has been signed by a representative of each Council.

5 Scrutiny and the LAA event

5.1 To facilitate preparation for scrutiny reviews involving partners an event was arranged for leading scrutiny Members from the County, District and Borough Councils.

5.2 The event, hosted by County Councillor Paul Richardson, as the Chairman of NYCC Scrutiny Board took place on 26 June 2008. The workshop was attended by 14 Members of Overview and Scrutiny from the County Council and eight District Council Members, representing all seven districts.

5.3 Members were able to consider a range of options for the scrutiny of LAAs in two-tier areas. The shared view was that the use of existing overview and scrutiny arrangements for scrutinising the outcomes of partnership working would be the preferred option. Members stated clearly on the day they do not want to see additional bureaucracy but the better sharing of information, learning and expertise between the Local Authorities in North Yorkshire.

6 NYCC approach

6.1 As mentioned in section 5 above, the use of existing arrangements for scrutiny of LAA targets is being supported and this involves:

- Quarterly Performance Monitoring meetings between Executive and Scrutiny Board which also includes performance data on LAA targets. (Reports are shared with District Councils and available on the NYCC website.)
- Annual 'Overview' report on the LAA to Safe and Sustainable Overview and Scrutiny Committee to which District Councils will be invited. (It is anticipated this will take place in the spring each year.)
- Overview and Scrutiny Committees monitor progress toward the LAA targets relevant to their remit, undertake in-depth reviews if required and invite participation from District Councils as appropriate.

7 District Council approach

- 7.1 The District Councils are also utilising existing scrutiny arrangements to consider performance data on the LAA provided by the County Council and to review relevant areas.
- 7.2 The District Councils are already looking at many areas that are covered by the LAA for example: Selby DC have recently looked at 'Teenage pregnancy' while Richmondshire DC did a piece of work on 'GP out of hours'. The task now is to look at how the results of this type of work can be shared with other District Councils and the County Council without adding another layer of bureaucracy. We already have a good example of this with a scrutiny review of flooding co-ordinated by the County council that involves Councillors from the County and each of the seven District councils.

8 Recommendations

- 8.1 The North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership Executive is recommended to note the information in this report.

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Background Documents: Report to NYSP Combined Steering Group
12 September 2007

Annexes: ANNEX A NYCC O&S Information sheet 8
ANNEX B Memorandum of Understanding