

## INFORMATION ITEM



### Report from the Joint District/County Council Scrutiny Members' Workshop held on Tuesday 10 November 2009 at County Hall, Northallerton

#### 1. Focus of the workshop

This workshop focussed on evaluating scrutiny of partnership working; considering areas for improvement; identifying gap areas for scrutiny; and discussing how priority areas for scrutiny can best be addressed in the future.

The workshop was chaired by Cllr Paul Richardson, Chair of the Scrutiny Board at North Yorkshire County Council. 20 Members attended the workshop and groups were mixed so that several different District and County members were represented in each group. Scrutiny officers from Richmondshire District Council, Selby District Council and North Yorkshire County Council facilitated the workshop.

The workshop was split into 3 sessions and a summary of the outcomes for each session is given below.

#### 2. Session 1: Evaluating scrutiny of partnership working

*a) What examples have there been of effective scrutiny of partnership working over the past 18 months? Why were these successful?*

- Scrutiny of diabetes services (Scarborough) – involved PCT, local diabetes groups, schools
- Flooding Joint Review
- Health scrutiny
- Maternity services
- Dentistry
- Teenage pregnancy (Selby) – the NYCC review was used as a starting point for the District council's review, and the recommendations went to the PCT.
- Shelters in the Borough's parks (Scarborough) – questioned the Civic Society
- Scrutiny of bus services and broadband provision – meet regularly with partners to build up a rapport

*b) How could scrutiny of partnership working be improved?*

- Sharing information on reviews
- Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs meeting quarterly
- Monitoring is very important
- Consider who do the recommendations need to go to?
- Communication with partners - Do they know they have a duty to co-operate?
- Meet partners on their own patch.
- Less duplication of work between districts and county/district
- Share information about work
- When scrutinising own operations, look at good practice in other North Yorkshire councils
- Strategic partnerships – how do we scrutinise and monitor?
- Joint working with other local authorities outside North Yorkshire
- Use health scrutiny as a model
- Ensure all districts are involved from Day One including officer input – ensure involvement in draft report
- Ensure in joint reviews early involvement from all partners
- Get everyone around the table early in the process
- Scrutiny to ‘go through the right process’
- Sell scrutiny as ‘critical friend’
- Consider what can you do when partners don’t want to get involved?
- Raise the profile of scrutiny
- Think about the mechanics of organising meetings
- Stumbling blocks – each have own agenda – however, if participative, should feel confident to express views and how they fit together
- Tourism – joint approach possible
- When starting review, contact other authorities to share info
- Action point – Scrutiny Officers Network to share ‘scrutiny review list’
- Look at setting up a central point of information for scrutiny, possibly website page
- Make sure that joint work is reflecting relevant authorities – can be districts working with districts
- Circulate final reports between councils
- Information from scrutiny reviews is relevant for more than own Executive/Cabinet – also important for partners

### 3. Sessions 2 and 3: Identifying the gaps in scrutiny and priority areas for potential future scrutiny

As a whole group, Members considered how the gap areas that are priorities for scrutiny should be most effectively scrutinised. The table below lists the suggestions that were made.

Priority area for scrutiny	What is the issue?	Group's suggestion for how this could be scrutinised
Concessionary fares	How does the partnership work and what are the issues of the scheme for each district around the county?	Districts and County Council to possibly take the lead
Rural services	Accessibility, availability and cost of provision	Districts and County
Park and Ride Schemes		Scarborough BC to share their findings so that other Districts can learn lessons from their experience
Regional government	Effectiveness/efficiency of evolving local and regional structures within Yorkshire & Humber. How does North Yorkshire punch its weight at regional level?	Leave this issue until after general election in 2010 due to possible changing structures
Affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Availability of land for building</li> <li>▪ Second homes escalate house prices</li> <li>▪ Parish Housing Trusts and Registered Social Landlords</li> </ul>	Richmondshire DC and Harrogate BC to take the lead and share scoping with other Districts
Alcohol harm reduction strategy/night time economy	How effectively is the Strategy being implemented?	Harrogate BC to take the lead
Disabled housing budget		Craven DC to take the lead
Tourism	Effects of the economic downturn – e.g. shop fronts	County Council to take the lead

Recycling	Learning lessons on best practice from other parts of the county, to achieve a more consistent and joined-up service	County Council to take the lead
Youth involvement in politics and scrutiny		County Council to take the lead
Elderly care		County Council to take the lead
Youth services		County Council to take the lead
Sustainability in the Local Transport Plan	Increasing cycle networks	County and Districts – better communication on work relating to LTP
Young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs)	NYCC review has begun Need to consider impact on leisure services	County Council to take the lead and involve Districts re. cost
Allotments	Possibilities for compulsory purchase/ lease	Scarborough BC to share findings County to lead on compulsory purchase/lease
Information-sharing on scrutiny reviews and outcomes	List all reviews on NYCC website with links to DC websites	County Council to take the lead

#### **4. Follow-up actions from the workshop**

It was agreed that the outcome of the discussions would be summarised in a report and sent to all participants and scrutiny contacts at each council.

It would then be for the appropriate scrutiny committee at each council to consider how to action the priority areas for scrutiny that had been identified in the table above, bearing in mind the constraints of existing scrutiny work programmes and resources.

The County Council would consider the report at its Scrutiny Board meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> December.