

**Chair of the Scrutiny Leadership Board's Report to Council
November 2023**

**CHAIR OF THE SCRUTINY LEADERSHIP BOARD'S REPORT TO COUNCIL - COUNCILLOR
PAUL GALLEY**

New Scrutiny Structure

I was appointed as Chair of the Scrutiny Leadership Board at Annual Council in May 2023 and at the same a new Scrutiny Committee structure was adopted by the Council increasing the number of Committees to four – Adult Social Care and Health, Children and Young People's, Levelling Up and Climate Change and Environment – all sitting underneath the Scrutiny Leadership Board, which is again comprised of the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs in addition to the Chair of the Audit Committee.

The new Committees have all now met between two and three times and have all held work planning sessions and commenced on a busy workload of strategy input reviews, training and development opportunities and briefings outside of the formal committee meetings. This report provides a summary of the key work to date this Municipal Year.

Scrutiny Leadership Board

We are keen to ensure that the Scrutiny Leadership Board takes on more of the role of a management board and delegates any duties that might be considered a scrutiny committee role to the committees themselves. As such the Council complaints information and performance against Council Plan delivery will be considered by the individual committees going forward.

Following the most recent North West Employer's review of scrutiny, an action plan has been developed to implement the suggestions made through the review and progress is being monitored by the Scrutiny Leadership Board. Key actions include the development of public engagement within scrutiny and we have set up a working group to consider aspects of communications and public involvement in scrutiny which we hope to conclude and enact in the New Year.

As always, we are coming up to the time of year in which scrutiny engages in the budget process and two meetings are being held in December and January to allow Member input. At a recent meeting of the Board, Members posed a question regarding what potential input could be made and were advised that a focus on the assumptions being made in the budget would be helpful with any ideas for budget savings welcomed and this is what the Board will focus on in the upcoming meetings.

Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee

The Committee has been focusing on building and renewing relationships with NHS colleagues and has received a briefing on the Integrated Care Board with the Chair and Vice-Chair recommending regular relationship meetings.

Committee meetings have considered items including an update on maternity services progress following the Care Quality Commission inspection, the performance of the North West Ambulance Service in Blackpool and their work to prevent falls and it has received the Blackpool Safeguarding Adults Annual Report. Outside of the Committee meeting a briefing on the work of Adult Services has been received and joint meetings with the Levelling-Up Scrutiny Committee have been held to input into the development of the Sexual Health Strategy and the Healthy Weight Strategy.

Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee

The pre-Committee briefing sessions for the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee have been trialing a new 15 minute briefing, whereby Members receive a short and sharp overview of a key topic. To date these have focused on legislation in education and the role of the LADO. The trial has proved a success and similar briefings will now be rolled out to the other Committees where appropriate.

Members have had the opportunity to feed into the development of the new Children, Young People and Families Plan and have held or have upcoming special informal meetings to consider the development of the new place-based safeguarding arrangements and the Preparing for Adulthood Strategy when young people and parents who have contributed to the Strategy to date will be in attendance to talk about their input. Site visits are also being held during November to the new family hubs to give the Committee a real life view of their work in the community.

Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee

The work of the Committee has been wide ranging to date. A review panel has focused on Beach Management and Sea Water Defences considering the plans for the use of £150m in investment funding by the Environment Agency to improve Blackpool's beaches through the retention of sand and the building of new sea water defences.

A tour of the new CCTV Control Centre was also undertaken by the Committee on 12 October, as part of its CCTV Infrastructure Review Panel work. After viewing the new facilities and receiving a presentation on plans for the second stage of improved CCTV infrastructure, Members considered the proposals for identifying where new cameras will be installed, including a pro-forma for Councillors and Community Groups to use.

Going forward, there is a briefing on the Climate Adaption Plan scheduled in December and a review panel meeting on the Community Safety Partnership's Serious Violence Duty.

Levelling Up Scrutiny Committee

Committee meetings have received regular updates on Levelling Up, considered tourism performance and looked at housing and town centre regeneration as well as consideration of the Blackpool Tobacco Addiction Service.

Due to the cross-cutting nature of this Committee a lot of work has been undertaken jointly with both the Adult Social Care and Healthy Scrutiny Committee on public health strategy in addition to a joint meeting that was held with the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee on 13 July 2023 to discuss Sea Water Quality. Members received a briefing on the impact of recent discharges in to the sea near Blackpool and heard that the impact on sea water quality had been minimal. It was agreed that further work would be considered following the outcome of the EA investigation into the discharges later in 2023.

Upcoming is a meeting to feed into the development of the Alcohol Strategy.

Conclusion

The Committees have hit the ground running and are all contributing to new policy and strategy and making an impact through their questioning, challenge and identification of areas of work to pursue through meetings. The challenge has been fitting in all the meetings, with demands on Members' time higher than ever which is why I would like to thank everyone for their dedication and contribution so far. Without your time and input scrutiny would not be able to add the same level of value as it currently does.

I look forward to working with all the Chairs, Vice Chairs and Committee Members on their journey throughout the next few years, supporting them and identifying appropriate training and development opportunities as well as seeing the innovative and inspiring ideas they come up with to help improve Council service delivery and performance.

A key priority for me is to raise the profile of scrutiny both inside and outside of the authority and highlight to everyone the value added. We will also be seeking to engage the public more, reflect on lived experiences and offer different perspectives to our Scrutiny Members, with examples of this already happening through the site visits being undertaken and the invitation of young people and their parents to an upcoming meeting.

I look forward to presenting the Annual Report to Council in June 2024 and highlighting the achievements of this Municipal Year.