

## **Deputy Leader's Report - July 2016**

I would like to begin by thanking Steve Stewart for all his work as Acting Chief Executive. Our new permanent Chief Executive, Mary Weastell, will be starting in the role in August and I look forward to working with her.

### **Local Plan**

Last month, our new Local Plan proposals were agreed by Executive. There will now be an 8-week consultation where we want to hear feedback from local residents, businesses, and organisations.

Our evidence-based proposals seek to provide the housing York needs, but protect the character and setting of our city. The main changes from the plans brought forward under the previous administration are a reduction in land for green belt development of over 50%, which is supplemented by the removal of so-called safeguarded land.

Our projections are in line with York's independently-assessed housing need, taking account of completed sites, sites with permission and supplemented by windfalls (sites which come forward during the plan period). Overall, the proposals will deliver land for at least 8,277 homes for the period up to 2032 and 2,450 homes for the period 2032 and 2037. I would like to thank officers for all their work in producing the proposals and encourage everyone to have their say in the coming weeks.

### **Budget Underspend 15/16 and City Vision**

A report agreed at June's Executive showed that the Council came in £876,000 under its £119million revenue budget for the financial year 2015/16. Given the ongoing national funding cuts and budget pressures, we agreed to put the majority of this into contingency; however, we did decide to fund the following projects to support our key priorities:

- Recycling (£30,000) - Launch a Community Recycling Fund to support projects and voluntary groups across the city as part of our ongoing ambition to make York the "Greenest City in the North".
- Pupil Premium/ Narrowing the Gap (£15,000) - A citywide project to support work to narrow the gap between disadvantaged children and their peers, including the launch of a York "Pupil Premium toolkit" to help share best practice.
- City Ambassadors (£25,000) - Work with the BID to support the launch of an Ambassador scheme offering visitors and residents a friendly welcome to the city-centre, as part of our support for the early-evening economy.
- Jobs Fair (£10,000) - Work with partners to deliver up to 2 further citywide jobs fairs as part of our ongoing efforts to help York residents access employment and training opportunities, in addition to more targeted sector-specific activity.

In June, Cllr David Carr and I presented our revised 12 Point Plan (Progress and Next Steps) to the Corporate and Scrutiny Management Policy and Scrutiny Committee (CSMC). This plan showed the progress we have made since last May. Key achievements have been the re-introduction of Ward Committees with an increased budget, the bringing back of winter green bin collections, and the new cross-party pre-decision scrutiny system.

The focus in the coming 12 months, which is represented in the new City Vision (to be tabled at the Executive, 14 July 2016) will remain on frontline services with the roll-out of 94 extra bins, new LED streetlights and a £2.7million investment in road repairs. Work will obviously focus on a new Local Plan, the One Planet York initiative and other major projects such as Burnholme and York Central.

### **Senior Management Review**

Executive agreed last month a reorganisation of the Council's senior management structure. We originally agreed to commence a review last June and for a minimum of £150,000 saving to be achieved from that review. The proposed changes will achieve a £230,000 reduction in salary costs by removing one Assistant Director post (which ended 31 March 2016) and a Director post.

### **Economic Strategy and Employment Figures**

The Council has worked with around 100 partners citywide to create a new economic strategy for the city. It focuses on eight main targets:

1. Deliver York Central.
2. Deliver a Local Plan that supports a high-value economy.
3. Take practical steps to develop and retain talent in the city.
4. Drive real University and research led growth in high-value sectors.
5. Lobby for investment in future transport networks.
6. Use local business rates freedoms to drive economic growth.
7. Make a positive statement of York's cultural identity to drive economic growth.
8. Bring businesses together in low cost ways.

The latest employment news was positive for York. Figures released by the Office for National Statistics showed a 35.4% fall in the number of people claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) in York over the last year. I am particularly pleased that the number of young people (aged 18-24) claiming JSA has also fallen by 60% in the last year.

### **Flood Awards and Flood Inquiry**

The Council worked with *The Press* to set-up the recent flood awards with the new York & District Medal presented to residents and organisations for their work during and after Boxing Day. I would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who won on the night, and all those who helped deal with the floods across York. The city showed real community spirit in the most testing of conditions.

In June, we also ran a series of public meetings as part of the flood inquiry. These gave an opportunity for those affected by the flooding to detail their personal experience and address issues such as whether the warnings were sufficient, their experience of the emergency response and whether communications were effective. Two additional sessions will take place in September.

### **One Planet York**

The One Planet York initiative was officially launched at the York Festival of Ideas in June. This was a hugely successful event with numerous organisations and businesses showcasing practical action being taken, including Yorkshire Water, Native Architects, Novalux LED Ltd, Nestle, First York, Sustrans, Better Homes Yorkshire and Edible York.

The One Planet York programme supports our ambition for York to become the Greenest City in the North. In the coming months, we plan to lead by example by becoming a One Planet Council as we aim to boost recycling, cut carbon emissions, and increase the use of renewable energy. My colleague Cllr Andrew Waller is leading on this work and will be bringing forward a range of policy papers at his Decision Session on August 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **Play Equipment**

In May, I approved an updated play policy 'Taking Play Forward' and as part of this £265,000 of funding for playground improvements in 2017/18. Around £30,000 has already been allocated towards the replacement skatepark in Rowntree Park.

We are now inviting suggestions for schemes from children, young people, parents or carers. The consultation was launched in the summer edition of Shine with 16,000 free copies having been distributed to all schools in York and I look forward to see the results of the consultation.

### **Armed Forces Covenant and Parish Carter**

I was delighted to recently be appointed as the Council's Armed Forces Champion, due to my role as Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement. In June Cllrs Taylor, Carr, Boyce and myself attended the re-signing of the York Community Covenant Agreement. This recognises the hard work and sacrifice of our armed forces, and the re-signing was particularly pertinent this year given the role armed forces played in helping deal with the Boxing Day floods.

In May, I also signed the York Parish Charter between the Council and the 31 parish and town councils. Parish councils are the grass roots of our local democracy and play an invaluable role across York.

*If members have any questions on the content of this report or would like further information then please email me on [cllr.kaspden@york.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.kaspden@york.gov.uk)*

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