

- 1 There have been 5 meetings of the Executive since the last ordinary meeting of the Council.
2 The final two review reports requested as part of the protocol arrangements for the management of
3 the Council during the present financial year have been received.
4 The first concerned the **Safe City** agenda. Executive members were pleased to note the
5 considerable reduction in crime levels achieved over the last year. The year to date figures for
6 individual crimes are as follows

House burglary	-7%
Other burglary	-12%
All violence	-3%
Common assault	+3%
Wounding	-20%
Personal robbery	-7%
Other robbery	-46%
Theft of vehicle	-21%
Theft from vehicle	-27%
Vehicle interference	-42%
Criminal damage	-12%
Theft of pedal cycle	-14%
<u>Total crime reduction</u>	<u>-9%¹</u>

- 7 The transformation in the performance of the Police and the Safer York Partnership in making York
8 a Safer City in which to live and work has been marked over the last few years.
9 The Executive agreed that our target must be to have the safest City in the country, judged by both
10 crime statistics and public perceptions, and that this would mean the vigorous implementation of
11 new initiatives like the Capable Guardian scheme and the introduction of effective measures to
12 deal with issues such as speeding traffic.

¹ The change in levels of reported crime in York from 1st April 2007 to 12th March 2008, compared to the same period last year:

13 The provision of mobile speed check equipment will have the support of the Executive. Within that
14 context it is important that the proposed use of the Annual Road Safety Grant is agreed by the
15 Council and the local Police Commander.

16 The Executive thanked the local Police Commander and the officers of the Safer York Partnership
17 for the progress made in addressing community safety issues during the last year, requested the
18 North Yorkshire Police Authority to, at least, continue existing funding levels, through the York
19 command unit, for the Safer York Partnership, confirmed its support for the Neighbourhood Policing
20 initiative which has done much to improve public perceptions of the effectiveness of community
21 safety arrangements in the City and looked forward to the introduction of initiatives, such as the
22 mobile speed enforcement service and Community Guardian scheme, as further evidence of the
23 City's determination to establish a safe and secure community environment fit for the 21st century.
24 The second review report looked at **tree cover** in and around the City and provided some options
25 for developing a strategic approach towards the management and protection of the City's trees.

26 This report was a first step towards adopting a tree strategy for the city. It outlined a timetable that
27 would allow a strategy to be adopted by the end of 2008. Most residents will be aware of the
28 environmental benefits of trees which range from improving the quality of life to influencing CO2
29 levels. York does have a management system for trees and some trees are protected under
30 planning laws. However, we have no written policy covering the management of all trees, the
31 number of trees or, indeed, to protect trees which fall outside the current regulations.

32 A tree strategy would also allow community woodland to be developed and would encourage
33 partnership working with other agencies which in turn could lead to outside funding sources being
34 made available.

35 The Executive agreed to ask officers to codify a tree management strategy for the city.

36 Another major issue facing the City is **traffic congestion**. The Executive considered a report on
37 the submission of a bid for funding, from the Regional Transport Board (RTB), for the development
38 of 3 new Park & Ride (P & R) sites at Askham Bar, the A59 near Poppleton, and Clifton Moor.

39 The RTB found itself with £93 million headroom in its budget and has invited bids for new schemes.
40 Bids had to be submitted by 15th February.

41 Our LTP identifies a number of key issues which include increasing the capacity of the Outer Ring
42 Road (ORR) to reduce congestion in the city centre allowing reallocation of road space to buses,
43 cyclists and pedestrians and providing additional park and ride sites to intercept traffic on all main
44 radials.

45 Phase 1 of the *Access York* bid addresses the provision of new P & R sites by proposing new sites
46 on the A59 and on Wigginton Rd and replacing Askham Bar with a larger capacity site with the
47 associated bus priority measures. Phase 2 will address the capacity of the ORR.

48 Phase 1 is within the maximum level allowed for bids and has the added advantage that each of
49 the 3 sites could be developed independently. Individually, and as a package, they represent
50 excellent Value for Money. York has a good track record in delivering P & R sites.

51 Phase 2 needs more work and the ORR study is currently being updated. Options being
52 investigated range from enlarged roundabouts, with or without grade separation, to possible
53 dualling of the most congested sections. Options for enhanced crossing points such as subways
54 at key locations and improved cycling facilities will be included. We should be in a situation to
55 submit a bid for Phase 2 in the autumn

56 The Access York project combines major infrastructure improvements into a single scheme which
57 will provide a step change in transport provision for the city.

58 At the time of writing the agenda for the RTB has just been published and I am pleased to record
59 that the York Access project phase 1 is recommended for approval.

60 The Council will not receive its 2008 overall **CPA score** until the *in depth* inspection undertaken in
61 January has been evaluated. However the Council has received confirmation that it continues to be
62 rated as a "good" Council under the assessment criteria used to measure performance in 2007.

63 The independent assessment of how the Council uses its available resources has resulted in a
64 score of 3 (out of 4) this year- up from a 2 last year. The 'Use of Resources' report has also said
65 that the council's performance in this area is 'improving well'. The Council's fraud service has also
66 been highly praised by the District Auditor and has been used as an exemplar of best practice
67 nationally.

68 The Council has also received its Annual Audit Letter which provides a snap-shot of how the
69 Council was performing at the end of the 2006-07 financial year.

70 It does, however, provide a useful tool to mark progress year on year. This year's letter is possibly
71 the most encouraging **Annual Audit letter** the authority has ever received.

72 Overall the independent District Auditor states that the Council is 'Improving well' and
73 demonstrating 'Good' performance across the board. It states that certain priority service areas
74 have 'significantly improved' and performance has remained high in many others. It also says that
75 the council is now reaching out to 'hard to reach' groups in the community- something that has not
76 been recognised previously.

77 The letter praises the Council for providing 'good value for money'. It states that the Council is now
78 getting more out of its small budget and a relatively low government grant settlement, by using new
79 technologies and developing a strategic approach to managing risk and procuring goods and
80 services at a better value than before.

81 It also commends the work of the Council in several important areas of performance- such as they
82 way it plans and budgets for its service provision; the way it works with outside partners; the

83 process in which officers and councillors make decisions; and for developing a 'proactive approach'
84 to sickness and absence through the introduction of the 'Attendance at Work' policy.

85 A number of key services were rated highly by the District Auditor: waste management (significant
86 improvements in recycling); children and young people (rated as 'excellent'); social services (good);
87 and Benefits (good).

88 The Audit and Governance Committee will look in detail at the letter but in the meantime the
89 Executive has asked officers to prepared action plans aimed at further improving those activity
90 areas highlighted as requiring attention by the Auditor.

91 The Executive considered the implications for York of the Government's review of sub-national
92 economic development and regeneration, and the role that the City should play in the emerging
93 **Leeds City Region** (LCR).

94 Executive members had mixed feeling about this item. While cooperation between local authorities
95 on matters of common interest are often valuable, the City Region concept originates in the
96 concept of "mayoral power". Many of the authorities in the LCR are sceptical about this concept.

97 The Executive approved the involvement of the Council in the Leeds City Region but asked officers
98 to approach any discussions, with partner authorities, with caution given the concern that York
99 might lose some of its ability to determine its own priorities and to have full control over all
100 resources that might be available to it in the future.

101 The Executive considered a proposal to instigate a pilot project to tackle **deprivation** in one
102 geographically targeted area of the City, on the basis of the latest published information on the
103 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).

104 The report sprang from the decision of the Executive taken in December to support a pilot project
105 aimed at understanding why several IMDs in York fair badly in national government comparisons
106 and to use the results to ensure that the Council has an effective approach to combating social
107 inequalities across the City.

108 The worst performing IMD lies in the Kingsway West area. It is hoped that partner organisations will
109 help with resourcing the project. Any remaining funding will be a be a call on the LPSA2 funding
110 (with an application to the Venture Fund possibly being necessary)

111 The Kingsway West area fell into the bottom 10% of neighbourhoods with a low *Index of Multiple*
112 *Deprivation*. This is by no stretch of the imagination a "run down" area with house prices buoyant
113 and a good community spirit evident. But in one way the low score was unsurprising as there are a
114 large number of older people living in the community with 2 Council and 1 private elderly persons
115 retirement homes in the area.

116 Many rely on state pensions and the government survey result is weighted heavily by income
117 levels. Many of the other properties are 1 bed roomed social housing flats which will again tend to
118 be occupied by people with low incomes.

119 Since the IMD survey was completed in 2005, the Council has finished modernising the homes in
120 the area, the new Hob Moor School has been completed and - along with the rest of York - crime
121 levels have dropped dramatically. These actions may have already taken the neighbourhood higher
122 up the *league table*.

123 Nevertheless the Council, working with partners such as the PCT, police and voluntary sector, do
124 wish to do an in depth study in the neighbourhood to check what further actions are required to
125 ensure that the community has the support that it needs to flourish. I would expect that a significant
126 amount of work would be concentrated on health issues.

127 When the results of the pilot are known, I would expect that any techniques that have been proven
128 to work will be rolled out to similar neighbourhoods both within the Westfield Ward and more widely
129 across the City

130 The Executive also considered the future of the **Youth Service** in York and adopted a directly-
131 managed model when responsibility for the Connexions service transferred to the Council in April.

132 It has also approved a temporary appointment to review the working of the **City Archive** service,
133 agreed to publish the **Local Development Framework** Allocations Development Plan for
134 consultation purposes, approved a plan to establish a partnering agreement between the
135 Council's City Strategy and Neighbourhood Services departments, for the delivery of maintenance,
136 restoration and major restoration schemes on the **City Walls** and approved amendments to the
137 original agreements between the Council and the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust in relation to the
138 **Derwenthorpe** site, to enable the sale of land to go ahead and the development to proceed.

139 Three notices of motion were considered.

140 The first had been referred to the Executive by Council and concerned the **prosperity of**
141 **peripheral streets** in the City centre. The Executive resolved to agree the following actions as their
142 response to the motion:

143 a) Work with retailers, traders and other businesses on the peripheral streets to offer advice and
144 encouragement.

145 b) Work with Visit York to examine the scope for further publications to attract additional visitors to
146 the peripheral streets.

147 c) Examine the scope for extending the range of festivals and market events beyond the main City
148 Centre area.

149 d) Develop further initiatives to promote the evening economy, taking account of the role of
150 peripheral streets.

- 151 e) Maintain progress with developing the City Centre Area Action Plan and ensuring that this is
152 focused on supporting the gateways and fringe streets.
- 153 f) Consider the extent of the footstreets review initiative, through consultation during this review.
- 154 g) Carry out further work to examine the scope for bringing empty property in peripheral streets back
155 into use.

156 Officers were also asked to examine how action might be taken to stimulate footfall in Micklegate by
157 the use of advertising and / or automated announcements on the Park and Ride buses, both in the
158 short term and in the long term once the new bus fleet comes into use.

159 The second notice of motion concerned **Age Friendly Cities** and was submitted via the Executive.

160 The World Health Organisation (WHO) launched its Age-Friendly Cities Guide; on the basis that
161 the world is rapidly ageing and that the world is a growing city. The motion noted that older people
162 account for a higher proportion of the population in York than nationally, and suggested the Council
163 support the key features of the guidance to bring about improvements in the lives of older people.
164 The Executive supported many of the items listed in the motion although there was a feeling that
165 technology might enable older people to retain their independence rather than, as implied in the
166 motion, be a barrier to access.

167 The Council is already doing much of what is contained within the motion. We suggest that the
168 Council should refer the issues to the Social Inclusion Working Group (SWIG) and the Inclusive
169 York Forum to consider the guidance and make any future recommendations.

170 The third notice of motion was tabled direct to the Executive and concerned a report prepared by
171 the Director of Neighbourhood Services who had been asked to **review neighbourhood**
172 **management in** York taking into account recent government legislation.

173 The officer report was helpful in mapping the progression of the Neighbourhood Management
174 Team (*Neighbourhood Pride Unit*) which has been developing over the last five years in a way
175 which has responded more directly to the needs of residents in the various communities that form
176 the city. We are ahead of the game nationally, but that should not stop us from moving forwards
177 and improving.

178 It is important to note that the York model has attracted interest from the Local Government
179 Information Unit, and prompted the IDeA (Improvement and Development Agency for local
180 government) to find out more about the success of our devolution and participatory budgeting
181 programmes. York was specifically invited to join the Neighbourhood Network for the LGIU, We
182 were asked to give a presentation to the other Councils specifically on our development of
183 Participatory Budgeting.

184 It is regrettable that the Government's proposals are in danger of being bogged down in
185 bureaucracy, as at the core of the changes to Neighbourhood Management in York has been the
186 improvement of services at grass roots level.

187 The Executive resolved to

188 i) Welcome the content of the officer report, and in particular the potential opportunities available to
189 strengthen neighbourhood delivery and communications, consultation and the involvement of local
190 people in local decisions.

191 ii) Approve a refreshed model of neighbourhood management broadly in line with Model One –
192 increased democracy and participation – as exemplified in Annex 1 to the officer report.

193 iii) Approve the continuation of a devolution model around delivery via ward committees, as
194 existing, to support and facilitate engagement at a local level.

195 iv) Approve the development of NAP's as a vehicle for delivering the adopted neighbourhood
196 model and tying together the strategic vision of the city and the local vision.

197 v) Approve the production of a citywide Consultation and Engagement Strategy to support the
198 refreshed neighbourhood model and consistent consultation across the council.

199 vi) Note the successful delivery of ward committee local improvement schemes in York, via a
200 participatory budgeting process, and recognises that the continuation of this approach will assist
201 the local authority as it continues to inform, consult and involve the local public in local decisions.

202 vii) Request the NMU to continue to work with the Economic Development Unit on options for
203 tackling deprivation in ward based communities.

204 viii) Note that it may not be possible to provide additional support for building based community
205 facilities from existing resources within the NMU, but anticipates that the demand for additional
206 devolution of this sort will be limited in York.

207 ix) Note that the Councillor Call for Action could be implemented from April 2008.

208 x) Approve a review of working arrangements, with those Parish Councils that request it, in line
209 with Option Two detailed in Annex 8 of the officer report, provided that any revised processes are
210 cost neutral.

211 xi) Advise officers that additional resources are unlikely to be available to the NPU, but that any
212 restructuring proposals considered to be essential can be the subject of a further report to the
213 Executive at a later date.

214 Finally the Council is being recommended to approve an updated integrated Treasury Management
215 Strategy Statement (including the annual investment strategy), the proposed Prudential Indicators
216 for 2008/09 to 2011/12 and the use of the revised Treasury Management Policy and the Treasury
217 Management Practices

218 The Treasury Management Strategy and Policy are of particular importance as the Council moves
219 towards the Hungate development that will realise significant revenue savings over the next 30
220 years. However, because of the high level of capital investment required to realise these savings,

221 the council's borrowing is expected to rise from the current £10 million per annum to around £30
222 million in 2009/10.

223 The borrowing strategy aims to minimise the risks to the Council of borrowing such large amounts
224 in a single year. In order to borrow at the best available interest rates, officers have the option of
225 borrowing in advance.

226 The investment strategy provides a projection of interest rates of the next 3 years and seeks to
227 maximise the returns to the Council whilst minimising the risks involved.

228 Over recent years the council treasury management has performed well taking out loans at very
229 low rates and investing them at higher rates, successfully generating revenue for the Council
230 enabling investment in Council services.

231 Steve Galloway
232 31st March 2008