

## **Report to Full Council from the Leader of the Council**

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### **York Central**

York Central continues to remain high on the Council's priority list, as we continue to lobby the Government for the Housing Infrastructure Funding needed to unlock the site and deliver essential infrastructure.

Together with city partners, I have written to both Jake Berry MP, the Northern Powerhouse Minister and Esther McVey MP, Minister of State for Housing and Planning, to press the Government on the need to release the Housing Infrastructure Funding as soon as possible. A wide range of stakeholders in this city are pulling together to make York Central a possibility, and this is the furthest the project has ever reached.

I am pleased that to date, York Central has received both Housing and Enterprise Zone status and this month, a further £18.5 million has been secured from the DCMS to transform the National Railway Museum, as part of NRM's 2025 Vision and the project's ambition to improve the city's cultural offer.

The Executive will soon consider proposals to release further Council funding in order to keep momentum on the project and ensure essential design work is carried out, to deliver new public spaces, jobs and houses for the city.

### **Council Brexit preparations**

Brexit preparations in the city continue to take place and the Council remains in conversation with a wide range of stakeholders to discuss the potential impacts of Brexit. The Executive agreed a 'Brexit preparations' report in September, highlighting the most recent work the Council is currently doing to support residents, communities and businesses.

We have also utilised Brexit contingency funding to create a new Community Involvement Officer post at the Council; a role which has been tasked specifically to support and reach out to EU nationals in the city. Alongside the Deputy Leader I wrote to all EU nationals this month, on the electoral register, to express our support and encourage take up of the EU Settlement Scheme.

However, with little support or clarity from the Government, these preparations are placing undue pressure on local authorities. We will of course continue to do what we can to prepare for the impact of Brexit, including protecting jobs and the local economy.

### **Council Plan**

The recent consultation on the new Council Plan has come to a close, with over 6,000 comments received during the consultation period.

The Council Plan is being developed to cover the next 4 years of the Council cycle. It is intended to shape all activity within the Council, acting as a guide for the Council to prioritise resources, monitor progress made and act a mechanism for us to deliver real improvements for communities.

It is also intended to work as a guide for partner organisations, businesses, communities and residents to help identify shared areas of interest, so the Council can work more effectively with stakeholders across the city.

### **Devolution and LEP Review**

Recent discussions around devolution have seen some progress towards achieving devolution across the region. As ever, the administration will continue to represent York in seeking a set of arrangements which recognise York's links north and west and the need for us to work collectively as a region to achieve the best for residents. Achieving devolution at a broad One Yorkshire scale remains the best

outcome for York. However, the Government has been clear that they require smaller interim arrangements on the journey towards wider devolution. It is clear that all areas of Yorkshire must move together and achieve fair deals which represent our interests.

I would like to place on the record that artificial boundaries which put places in one “box” are unhelpful and do not reflect the ambitions of our city. Any future arrangements must allow York to work with all our regional partners and we will ensure that discussions and consultation takes place at the right time across the council, with partners and residents.

The future LEP arrangements are, inevitably, linked to potential devolution. York, North Yorkshire and East Riding, and Leeds City Region LEPs continue to work together to ensure we can secure future investment and have a strong Local Industrial Strategy in place.

### **The Local Plan**

Over the summer, the Council consulted on ‘Proposed Modifications’ to the Local Plan and this took place between 10<sup>th</sup> June and 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2019. A total of 176 individuals responded to the consultation, raising around 1500 separate comments on the modifications presented and on wider aspects of the Plan.

Following the end of the consultation, Council officers have been working to collate and summarise the comments received, in order to provide the Inspectors with a full copy of the representations and to produce an addendum to the submitted Plan’s Consultation Statement, which has now been completed.

The Inspectors are now preparing for the first stage of hearings, which will address issues such as the ‘Duty to Co-operate’, Housing Need and Green Belt. Provisional dates have been agreed with the Inspectors for these initial hearings and these will be held on selected days over a two week period, beginning 9<sup>th</sup> December 2019 at York Racecourse.

## **East Coast Mainline**

At the last meeting on the East Coast Mainline Authority (ECMA), it was agreed that whilst we await the outcome of various Government reviews and the general uncertainty at Westminster, ECMA would push the investment case for the East Coast Main Line, using some of the figures from the research that was commissioned earlier this year. It is clear that there is an urgent case for investing in improved performance in the East Coast Mainline, which of course, has widespread cross-party and cross-county support.

Investment in the East Coast Main Line will deliver economic benefits across the country and not just in York, as customers will benefit from better reliability and greater resilience in the line. Currently, the line is vulnerable to major disruptions, which is why I am pleased to be joining calls for further funding to deliver a more reliable rail network on the East Coast Mainline.

## **Outer Ring Road**

Following extensive lobbying efforts, the £28 million scheme to dual the busiest stretch of York's outer ring road has progressed to the next stage following an announcement from the Department for Transport.

City of York Council has already agreed to contribute £2.8m, to dual the 7 ½ mile stretch from the A19 Shipton Road, through to Little Hopgrove (Malton Road).

When combined with the Council's £38.925m programme to upgrade seven of the ring road roundabouts, the dualling will significantly reduce congestion and relieve pressure on the city's road network, cutting the number of journeys made across the city centre.

## **Convention of the North**

I was pleased to recently attend the Convention of the North to represent York and join collective calls from the region to demand that the

Government adequately invest in public services, infrastructure and transport.

The Convention of the North brings together the North's political, business, civic and community leaders, in order to make a clear statement to the Government that the North is no longer prepared to accept the current funding situation.

In York, many of our services remain at the very bottom of Government funding tables, particularly when compared to other areas in the UK, and I will continue to lobby for greater investment in our region to address this issue.

### **Housing Delivery Programme**

I was pleased to attend the launch event for the Council's new Design Manual for the ambitious Housing Delivery Programme. The design manual will apply to 600 new homes to be delivered across York and will set the standard for new housing to be delivered under the Council's Housing Delivery Programme.

Having committed to delivering the largest house building programme in York since the 1970's, the council's five-year Housing Delivery Programme will aim to tackle some of the city's housing, social, health and environmental challenges. It will do so by creating homes which are affordable to rent, buy and run.

This manual will seek to address the climate emergency, to create beautiful and distinctive new neighbourhoods, foster new communities, and provide people of different income levels with a home.

I was also pleased to learn that the architect we have contracted to create the Design Manual, Mikhail Riches, have received the Stirling Prize for their zero-carbon development in Norwich.

### **Armed Forces Covenant and Ministry of Defence Gold Award**

Lastly, I was delighted that the Council received the country's highest national honour in recognition of its support for Britain's Armed Forces.

The Council was recently awarded a Gold Award in the Ministry of Defence's Employer Recognition Scheme. The award is the top accolade an organisation can receive in support of the Armed Forces.

Now in its fifth year, the ERS Awards recognises and rewards employers who employ and support those who serve, veterans and their families, typically by putting in place employment practices that support reservists to train and mobilise, and veterans to transition to civilian life. City of York council is only the seventh employer in the whole Yorkshire and Humberside region ever to have won the award, which was launched by the Government five years ago.

### **York Community Pride Awards**

It was good to attend The Press Community Pride Awards on 17<sup>th</sup> October. At the event I thanked all nominees, winners and those attending on behalf of City of York Council for their services to local communities. It was great to see that Carl Wain, a commissioning manager from the Council, won the Public Sector hero award. Congratulations to Carl and his wider team.