

Report for Full Council as Deputy Leader

Recent weeks have seen an unprecedented series of events in the running of the council and I would pay tribute to those councillors who have stepped up to ensure the continuity of provision of services, and critical responsibilities. Maintaining frontline services, and support for vulnerable residents has been the focus of members of the Executive.

This report is going to be slightly unusual in dealing with many of the issues which might otherwise have been dealt with in the Leader's Report but to ensure continuity and recognition of the hard work of council officers I have recorded them below.

1. Response to harsh weather

I would like to thank council officers who have worked hard over the winter to keep the city moving, and in particular during the late snows. A large number of teams across all departments have responded strongly to the challenges to maintain the provision of services to the public and in particular residents who depend on our services. I visited the team at the Peasholme Centre, and met with council staff and representatives from the Salvation Army who go out to meet rough sleepers on a regular basis to ensure that offers for accommodation and help are taken out into the street.



Gritting truck being filled up at Eco Depot

2. Preserving MOD jobs within the city

I have now received a response from the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State and Minister for Defence People and Veterans, Rt Hon Tobias Ellwood following my letter asking for assistance in maximising the retention of jobs in the city. There is a statement of understanding on the significance of the closure of the barracks, and an assurance that government officials will work closely with City of York Council to explore opportunities within the Hubs programme to keep the civilian posts within the local area. I have asked that York council officers respond quickly to these offers to establish links to work on retaining these jobs in the city.

3. LCR Business Rates Pool benefit to York

As City of York Council has been part of the pilot for the return of Business Rates the proposals as to how this funding in the city region is allocated has been the subject of a number of meetings with the latest one agreeing to provide £230,000 funding for the bid from York UNESCO city of media arts which would be part of the funding for the Mediale and other festivals in the city.

4. Yorkshire Leaders Devolution Meeting

There was a meeting in Leeds of the Leaders from Yorkshire councils on 5th March to consider the proposals from Government on the latest plans for Devolution. For many people around the table this follows many years of different proposals to address the situation. There is an information report going to the York Executive meeting on 15th March which contains the draft response which will need to be considered by all authorities. Key issues are the matter of how the South Yorkshire Mayoral system may in 2020 merge with a wider Yorkshire Model. Concerns have been expressed that not only will this result in some powers (as yet to be agreed) would be devolved from central government, but with new suggestions that there may be some taken up from local authorities which has caused some concern. There will be many lengthy discussions to follow on the details of the proposals with a 'to and fro' from central government.

5. Fairtrade Fortnight

The City of York has been a Fair Trade City since 2004 when as part of the process the council passed the appropriate resolution. As part of the national annual Fair Trade Fortnight there was a breakfast on 6th March at the Spurriergate Centre which was attended by councillors from across all parties demonstrating the awareness of this aspect of York's life.



6. Meeting with the new Police Commander for York

I have met with the new Police Commander for York, Chief Inspector Lindsey Robson, who has previously been an officer in the city and knows large parts of it very well. I raised residents' concerns about the need for visible neighbourhood police teams, and connections with Ward Teams, Residents Associations and Parish Councils. Announcements will be made by the Police locally in early April to facilitate this.

7. Meeting with INEOS on Shale Gas and Minerals and Waste Inspection in Public

At the end of February I met with representatives from INEOS to express residents' concerns with respect to the development of the Shale Gas Extraction/Fracking industry in the area around the city. Key was the issue of the 500m buffer for Fracking which has been proposed as part of the draft Minerals and Waste Strategy, the use and disposal of water, and density of fracking pads.

The Inspection in Public is taking place at County Hall for the York and North Yorkshire Plan, and on the 13th March session dealing with the subjects the Inspector requested more evidence from York and North Yorkshire to support the concept of the buffer before she reaches a decision. The guidance notes on the density figures in the Plan were accepted by the Inspector.

Matters considered at Executive Meetings since the last Full Council

8. Haxby Hall

The redevelopment of Haxby Hall Older Person's Home was approved by the Executive following consultation with residents, relatives and staff which will see a phased redevelopment enabling residents and staff to remain at the home. The proposals agreed would result in the transfer of the ownership and management to a partner organisation with agreements to ensure the council can access beds at the care home. The Executive paid tribute to the work of staff at the home and welcomed the opportunity to improve facilities for them and for residents.

9. Centre of Excellence for Disabled Children and their Families

Proposals for the development of a Centre of Excellence for disabled children and their families were approved by the Executive for the site of the former Windsor House Older Person's Home (for which a decision was made). The project is part of the wider development of services for disabled children and young people across the city. Feasibility and development work had taken a co-production approach, with parents, carers, staff and partner agencies involved at all stages, as well as the children and young people themselves. After considering options to increase the land available, in line with advice from Specialist Design Consultants, it was proposed to use part of Hob Moor School playing fields to develop shared amenities and, potentially, as the site for part of the Centre of Excellence building. The proposed business case for the project as a whole was set out in Annex C. Members welcomed the proposals in the report and placed on record their thanks to Eoin Rush, the council's former Assistant Director, Children & Families, for his work in developing the project.

10. Report on Homelessness in York

A report on tackling Homelessness was presented to the Executive in response to the motion agreed by Full Council in October 2017, and on work carried out in preparation for the Homeless Reduction Act 2017. The report outlined the range of services available to rough sleepers in the context of the statutory homeless and single homeless – resettlement services provided by City of York Council and partner agencies.

All known rough sleepers had been offered help and support to access accommodation, though some had been excluded due to their behaviour and some had refused any form of help. As of 3 January 2018, there were 9 rough sleepers in York; this figure fluctuated.

The Executive agreed that the severe weather provision should operate continuously throughout the winter period instead of just on cold nights only and to explore innovative ideas to build more one-bedroom properties as part of the allocation in the Housing Revenue Account for the construction of new council properties at an affordable social rent.

A £125,000 proposal for a 3 year scheme to expand the number of emergency beds in the city was also agreed.

11. Local Plan

The Section 19 Public Consultation on the Local Plan has now been published and the public is being invited to comment so that the Inspector can receive the report in May.

Views from all previous city-wide consultations have helped to shape the draft of the new Local Plan. Residents are being encouraged to take part in our current [consultation on the new Local Plan Publication draft](#) from Wednesday 21 February, to midnight on Wednesday 4 April 2018.

12. Schools Admissions

Admissions arrangements for the 2019/20 School Year were considered by the Executive.

13. Response to Terrorism Threat on advice

The Executive agreed following advice from North Yorkshire Police to work up proposals alongside York BID, Make it York, York Minster and York Racecourse to upgrade existing highway infrastructure, and to identify additional locations where vehicle restrictions will take precedence over access requirements due to the potential conflict between pedestrians and vehicles. Further reports will be coming to the Executive to respond to this, and issues about access to the city centre for residents, visitors and the operation of businesses.

14. Disposal of Willow House, Walmgate

The Executive approved a pragmatic approach to the sale of the former Willow House which will ensure the continuation of green open space in the area. This is in advance of the report which will be coming to the Executive for a strategic review of the protection of open spaces in areas owned by the council.

Cllr Andrew Waller