

**Channel 4**

Council may remember our Conservative Motion a year ago regarding bringing Channel 4 to Yorkshire. Channel 4 has now confirmed that it is looking to re-locate part of its operation to a regional location. The Chief Executive and I have recently met with Channel 4 representatives as part of the Leeds City Region, which Channel 4 is considering, along with Birmingham, Manchester, Glasgow and possibly Bristol.

Channel 4 confirmed it needed an area with a large and diverse population and was impressed with what it saw in Yorkshire. It helped that we could talk about York and the work that was taking place between Channel 4 and the University and Screen Yorkshire. I do believe York is a strong contender for one of the hub locations, but we now wait for a decision, as any change in location would need to be financially viable for Channel 4.

**Devolution**

I have had meetings with the Leaders of Leeds and Bradford regarding devolution. The position of the Yorkshire Leaders, including myself, remains “One Yorkshire”.

However, speaking to the North Yorkshire Leaders at a meeting last Friday, they want to have an equal vote for all councils for this to progress and personally I cannot see the likes of Leeds and Bradford agreeing to have the same voting powers as Ryedale and Richmond.

Kevin Hollinrake MP, who attended the meeting, has suggested a York City Region which would embrace North and East Yorkshire together with York and Hull as a possible ‘Plan B’, which gained a mixed reception. So devolution talks remain, as ever, ongoing.

James Brokenshire, the Secretary of State at D.C.L.G. has decided that there will be no “Yorkshire Deal” without the Sheffield Region. This position will be discussed at the Yorkshire Leaders meeting which is due to take place later this week.

## **Transport for the North**

I attended a Transport for the North meeting in Manchester, which is becoming west of Pennines focused , mainly through the power of the Mayors of Manchester and Liverpool. Rail disruption was the main focus of discussions and Transport Minister Jo Johnson attended to discuss compensation issues. Although York has missed the major problems that Cumbria and Blackpool have had there have been knock-on delays for many passengers entering and leaving York.

I was also elected Vice-Chair of the Board at that meeting, I intend to use this position to speak up for York and authorities east of the Pennines.

## **East Coast Rail Association**

I chaired a meeting of the newly formed East Cost Rail Association. I can confirm that at this time they have no plans to move their headquarters away from York, but this is something we need to monitor and keep pressure on.

## **Bootham Park Hospital**

A meeting has now taken place between CYC and York District Hospital regarding the sale of Bootham Park. NHS Property Services want to sell the property for a significant sum and will not discuss the matter with either party. Rachel Maskell MP has secured a meeting with a minister to move it forward which we will attend, and the York Outer M.P. Julian Sturdy has raised the intransigence of NHS Property Services during a debate in the House.

## **Housing Delivery Programme**

At last Thursday's Executive we endorsed our plan to move forward with our administration's proposal to take a lead in developing mixed tenure affordable housing on council owned land at city central sites. This is a project very close to my own heart and we have chosen a pathway which we believe will deliver these much needed homes as rapidly as possible.

I know that there has been some disquiet that in the first instance we will be developing these houses via the Housing Revenue Account rather than through a separate development company. The reasons why the administration was advised to do so were set out in detail last week. What is important to this administration is that we have been assured that this is the best and most efficient way for the council to play an innovative role in going forward to meet the housing needs of a broader range of York residents.

## **General**

With the submission of the Local Plan, the progress of Castle Piccadilly, York Central, the Community Stadium, Burnholme and other initiatives, we are entering an exciting time for our City. We do have issues such as the empty shops in Coney Street, although our occupancy rate is higher than many other cities, and we will continue to work with landlords and agents towards reversing the trend, although many of the solutions are out of our hands.

## **Barry Dodd**

It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of the Lord Lieutenant of North Yorkshire, and former Chair of the L.E.P. Barry Dodd in a helicopter accident. Barry was a good friend to the City of York, and his presence and advice will be sorely missed by many.