

Report to Full Council from the Deputy Leader of the Council

Having been one of the first two Green councillors elected in the City of York in 2003, it is a real honour to be one of the first two Green councillors within the administration running this fantastic city in 2019 and our first ever Deputy Leader working in partnership with the Liberal Democrat group.

This new administration aims to be different, responding effectively to the climate emergency declared following the Green and Lib Dem motion passed by all parties in March this year. Inevitably with a new leader, deputy leader and several new executive members, many of us are learning how to work effectively with each other and officers to deliver the changed priorities we wish to see within financial and staffing constraints. I hope we can rise to the challenge while fully engaging with residents, businesses and key stakeholders.

Corporate Plan and Budget additions

A key part of our negotiations to form a new administration has been to work from our two manifestos to start developing a new council plan for the coming four years and identify amended spending plans to take account of our new priorities, especially responding to a shift in focus in the light of the climate emergency. In particular, we have identified a need to build capacity through staff who can lead on carbon reduction within the council, build partnerships with others and learn from good practice elsewhere to help us to identify appropriate funding and 'quick win' measures. Alongside this a relatively small investment will allow us take a high level look at sustainable transport implications of the Local Plan developments, including the latest thinking on 'rapid transit' systems – light rail/tram to include updating work reviewing the bus network which was completed in 2015. This will help to inform the developments to our local transport plan which is expected to follow on from adoption of the Local Plan. I hope this will complement the independent consultation on local transport issues in the next few months led by the York Civic Trust and York Environment Forum.

Our additional highways capital programme aims to invest in making our roads safer for cyclists and drivers and a £1m investment in walking and cycling will be used to ensure key locations have safe attractive and joined up provision for walking and cycling. I also intend to consult with officers, ward councillors and interest groups to review our winter maintenance plans – all our bridges must be top priority for de-icing (including Millennium Bridge, Scarborough Bridge and Hungate Bridge) and key strategic cycle/pedestrian routes must be made safe on an equal footing to bus routes and walking routes to and from old people's homes, the hospital local shops etc. All this will be on top of the work already planned for tackling potholes, Traffic Signal Replacement (TSAR), highway resurfacing, junction improvements, car park upgrades etc.

Residents' Parking

As you may have seen covered in local media following my report to Economy and Place Scrutiny Committee on July 10th, I am keen to follow through the findings of a scrutiny that I registered a year ago, and agreed by the previous executive to review our residents' parking scheme. This includes some initial work to address the backlog of areas that are on the 'waiting list' and speed up the process of introducing these where residents have petitioned for their introduction. I would also like to see greater efficiencies in our administration systems, potentially linked to a reduction in the basic standard charge to more closely align to operational and enforcement costs of the scheme. I believe that such an approach could create conditions for more widespread extension within our residential areas with the benefit of boosting patronage of park and ride services and lowering urban congestion on peak time routes into York. I am pleased to see councillors in Clifton and Hull Rd wards are keen to explore the options for their residents not currently covered by resident parking schemes and I expect there may be similar demands from streets close to the Community Stadium, if displacement parking is experienced there.

York Central:

Now that the Government has confirmed that it will not hold an inquiry into the decision to grant outline planning permission for York Central, this administration has been working to identify where improvements can be made within the reserve matters application to enhance sustainability within the project. Of particular concern within my portfolio area is the impact that the additional traffic will have on the wider network. I am keen to work with partners to find ways that we might reduce vehicle traffic impact still further, in conjunction with new commercial occupiers as they are identified and come forward with reserved matters detailed applications.

A report will be presented to the Executive shortly highlighting the progress made on York Central to date, and what areas of the project can be enhanced to fit with this administration's priorities and bring out the principles highlighted in the Design Guide.

Castle Gateway

The Castle Gateway project is continuing to progress, with My Castle Gateway continuing to hold public engagement sessions over the Summer. These will refine the open brief for the new public area and look in more detail at how we can create new spaces and new routes which connect Clifford's Tower, the Eye of York, Tower Gardens and the Castle Museum, with a new pedestrian and cycle bridge over the Foss.

The project will shape a new area of high quality public realm on what was a prison for a century and then a car park for a further half century- to be transformed into a beautiful setting that better reflects the historical context and significance of this area in the heart of York. Alongside this work will be undertaken to enhance Piccadilly and provide alternative (flood –proof) parking within St George's Fields.

Anti-Idling Campaign

We launched our 'Kick the Habit' campaign in June to coincide with National Clean Air Day to encourage more people to consider air

pollution and ways that they can help to reduce its harmful effects. The campaign aims to prompt drivers to switch-off their engines when parked, in locations such as outside schools or when making deliveries. To support the campaign, authorised council officers are also able to issue fixed penalty notices of £20 to drivers who refuse to switch off their engines, after being observed idling on the public highway for more than two minutes. This very much helps to support awareness of the city centre Clean Air Zone that we will be introducing next year and the continued drive to expand provision for charging of electric vehicles in public places and new developments.

Sustainable travel to school

I am grateful for the continued hard work of our Sustainable Travel team in partnership with organisations like Sustrans in promoting walking and cycling, offering cycle training etc. We are all aware how much worse traffic is during term time and on a cold wet winter's day – making sustainable travel choices for the school run not only benefits the individuals in terms of exercise, independent travel, mental health and the like it helps reduce congestion notably around schools. I recently visited one primary school where students had looked at road safety issues near their school and were working together to come up with solutions – something as simple as getting hedges cut back and tackling pavement parking can make a big difference, particularly if led by demands from the young people themselves in a coordinated way.

City Centre Access

Considerable work has been done over the past 9 months consulting with a variety of groups on how best to mitigate the impact of essential security measures within the foot streets area of the City Centre. A paper will be coming to Executive shortly on the outcome of this work and the need to ensure we deliver appropriate measures quickly but in a way which provides suitable facilities for people with disabilities to access businesses and entertainment within central York. Consultation on recent changes in Fossgate and planned changes in Piccadilly will

also help to inform decisions about walking and cycling within the wider city centre.

Devolution

The Council is continuing to support the efforts across a number of partners and local authorities to secure a One Yorkshire devolution deal. In the coming months, there will be further discussions about our relationship with the Local Enterprise Partnerships and how best we can work together to secure the funding we need for the city.

Cllr A D'Agorne

9 July 2019