

## **LEADER'S REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL: OCTOBER 2017**

Since the last Council in July, the Executive has, amongst other items:

- considered two reports on the Community Stadium where we have agreed to proceed to construction, and I can advise Members that final contracts are anticipated to be completed in the next few days, and I can also advise that advance works have already commenced, and subject to final sign off the scheme will now proceed.
- approved the acquisition of Swinegate Court, a purchase that secures the Council's interest in these significant properties in the heart of York.
- received a number of reports on the Older Persons Programme, which will see significant investment in new facilities, generate significant capital receipts, and also the delivery of significant efficiencies in future years.
- approved the replacement and upgrade of the Scarborough Bridge footbridge.
- approved the temporary use of part of Castle Car Park during the summer of 2018 for Shakespeare's Rose Theatre, a 'pop-up' restoration theatre.

The Council's budget consultation has recently been launched and work is progressing in the development of the budget for 2018/19. We start this process from a strong position, which was demonstrated by an overall underspend in the last financial year of some £1m, with the first monitor report for this financial year indicating we are on track to operate within budget for this financial year.

This year has seen, once again, York's children and young people achieving excellent examination results. Un-validated results show that our pupils achieved some of the best results in the region at all key stages, despite significant changes in the Primary and Secondary curriculum over the past few years. Their hard work is mirrored by that of

people across our education system, and I would like to thank all our schools for their considerable efforts in helping achieve this.

I can also report that we received the keys to the restored Mansion House in the last few weeks, and during October and November the furniture and exhibits will be moved back into the House for an official opening in December. I would urge all Council Members to visit this precious historic building once opened.

## **Foreign Relationships**

In late September, the Civic Party and Chief Executive, travelled to York's twin city in Germany to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that twinning relationship. To my great disappointment, I was unable to accept my invitation to accompany them due to a long-arranged personal trip to Canada.

During the visit, the York party showcased York Central to an international audience and presented the strengths of our city as an inward investment destination. A particular highlight was York receiving the Lebendige Stadt Foundation Award presented to the Lord Mayor and Mayor of Muenster, Marcus Lewe, at an international event in Hamburg.

York's relationship with Munster was chosen as the winner because of its long history; 2017 marked 60 years of the twinning relationship. Since 1957 there have been numerous exchange visits and initiatives between our two great cities. We are proud that this relationship continues and we recognise that there is much we can learn from each other and celebrate together.

I am also pleased to report that we shall shortly be signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the city of Nanjing in China, with whom we are developing close ties across a wide range of interests, a relationship which was established by the former Lord Mayor, Cllr Dave Taylor. At the MoU signing, Nanjing will be represented by Mr Zheng Shang, the Secretary of Nanjing Education, and the MoU will formalise close collaboration between our two cities in the education and learning fields.

## **Acquisition of Swinegate Court, York**

Approval was given by Full Council on 20 July 2017 to allocate a capital budget of £15 million in order to make a strategic acquisition of a mixed-

use commercial property portfolio in York city centre, known as Swinegate Court East and West.

I am pleased to advise that this purchase was successfully completed on 6th October 2017 and hence the City Council now owns the freehold interest of this significant city-centre property, subject to and with the benefit of the various leases, all of which are held on full repairing and insuring terms (ie. these are the responsibility of the tenants).

The portfolio generates a present rent roll of £813,000 per annum, with potential for rental and capital growth, from a mix of tenants of the calibre of restaurants Lucia's and Slug and Lettuce, shops Mulberry and Sahara, and the York offices of Banks Sadler and solicitors Switalskis.

This acquisition not only makes sound commercial sense, where a surplus of income over debt servicing costs will boost the authority's annual revenue, but it also gives the Council a greater level of control as landlord than as planning authority thus giving it a bigger role in ensuring the ongoing economic vibrancy of the city centre. In addition there is the positive perception of the Council investing in the economic wellbeing and commercial potential of its own city-centre.

### **Shakespeare's Rose Theatre**

In August the Executive approved the temporary use of part of the Castle Car Park for a 'pop-up' prefabricated facsimile Rose Theatre to host productions of Shakespeare throughout next summer. The project will be delivered and managed by local firm, Lunchbox Productions, who will meet the entire cost of the project including the reimbursement to the Council of the car parking income foregone throughout the period.

In addition to bringing high quality entertainment to York, and presenting a great innovative opportunity to introduce school pupils and young people to Shakespeare, this will bring increased cultural activity and vibrancy drive to the Castle Gateway regeneration area. It will also allow the council to study the impact of the displacement of car journeys and parking with no effect on car-parking revenue. This could potentially pave the way for the long term redevelopment of Castle Car Park as the key to unlocking the regeneration of this part of the city.

## **Older Persons' Accommodation Programme**

Great progress is being made rolling out the Older Peoples' Accommodation Programme which when completed will provide over 900 new units of accommodation with care for older people across York utilising the resources of both private and public sector investment. This is an ambitious and complex programme of work, but I am confident that it will deliver what our city needs to support our older people in fit-for-purpose accommodation.

Some of the highlights of that programme include: work at Glen Lodge is nearly complete, providing 27 additional homes, all of which are designed to be 'dementia friendly' with the first residents expected to move in in November. Alongside this, planning applications are being prepared for the development of Extra Care schemes at Oakhaven and the 33 home extension at Marjorie Waite Court, delivering accommodation to support independence for those with some care needs.

At Burnholme, construction of the library and community centre is progressing well. The retained buildings are being modified and the steelwork for the new accommodation is being erected. Ashley House and HC1 have submitted plans for the Burnholme Health & Wellbeing Campus site for a new 80 bed residential and nursing care home on the site. In addition a total of 75 homes are planned for the site.

For people with a high level of need, we are progressing the development of new residential and nursing care provision. To facilitate this, we have recently started consultation with residents in Windsor House on options to close the home in early 2018. We recognise that this consultation process can be an unsettling and upsetting one and officers are working closely with the residents, families and staff to make sure they have the support and advice they need throughout.

Last week, at Lowfield Green, a planning application for 140 homes and accommodation for older persons on the former Lowfield school site was submitted. The older persons element of the scheme comprises a 70-bed care home, offering residential, nursing and dementia care with 18 apartments and 26 two-bedroomed bungalows, all of which are wheelchair accessible.

The new homes element is a total of 96 two, three, and four-bedroomed houses to be offered on a variety of affordable ownership and rental options. In addition, there will be facility for six self-build homes and up to 19 community plots as well as a health and public service building.

I want to emphasise what a great step forward this Lowfield planning application is. After lying idle for around 10 years, this previously developed site is now being brought forward for development as a high-quality, mixed tenure sustainable community; the largest housing development promoted by the Council since 1988 and a significant contributor to meeting the demand for housing in the city.

## **York Central**

The regeneration of this strategic 72 hectare (180 acre) brownfield site, one of the largest in the country, is being promoted by the York Central Partnership (YCP). YCP is made up of Network Rail (NR) the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), the National Railway Museum (NRM), and City of York Council (CYC).

The delivery of York Central is essential to the economic growth of York and the regional economy and will make a significant contribution to meeting housing demand in the city. It is estimated that on completion, the development of this site will add over £1billion to the local economy, increasing the city's GDP by up to 20%. In early 2016, an informal consultation on the principles of redeveloping the site showed clear public support for the concept.

Although the site has been identified for redevelopment for many years, previous attempts at delivery have been unsuccessful. However, considerable progress has been made of late and we are now finally in a position where all partners' ambitions for the site are aligned and many of the historic hurdles are being overcome.

For example, the YCP has been formed, operational land has been cleared and land ownership has been concentrated in the partners' hands, Housing Zone status has been conferred bringing investment from the HCA, an Enterprise Zone has been established bringing with it the prospect of significant additional business rates income to the Council, and finally a significant level of enabling funding has been provided by the West Yorkshire Transport Fund, the York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), the Leeds City region LEP, the HCA and Department of Communities and Local Government.

The next major step now to proceeding with the regeneration of this important site, bounded as it is by operational railway lines, is to approve the provision of a new vehicular access into the site. To this end following a wide consultation process on three of the possible locations and routes for the access, a detailed report will be presented to Executive in November detailing the various characteristics and merits of each option.

The YCP has established a series of masterplanning and development principles which is being used to shape the spatial plan for the site and the commercial arrangements for delivery. At the heart of these are the joint objectives to meet housing demand, deliver economic growth, and create a high-quality place which will complement the rest of the city and integrate with existing adjoining communities.

The selection of the access option will inform the final spatial layout of the site thus enabling the masterplan to be consulted on and finalised. This will then pave the way for the preparation and submission of planning applications, before which comprehensive pre-application consultation will be carried out.

**Cllr. David Carr**  
**Leader of the Council**

**Abbreviations:**

CYC – City of York Council  
GDP – Gross Domestic Product  
HCA – Homes and Communities Agency  
HC1 – Care Partner  
LEP – Local Enterprise Partnership  
MoU – Memorandum of Understanding  
NRM – National Railway Museum  
NR – Network Rail  
YCP – York Central Partnership