

Leader's Report to Council

13 December 2018

Rugby League World Cup

As you will know York has submitted a bid to host six women's pool games and a woman's semi-final game as part of the 2021 Rugby world cup, in addition to training sessions for both men's and women's teams.

I had the pleasure of meeting the Rugby International Board when they had their meeting in York some weeks ago. The Board were very positive about the city and assured me that, whilst decisions regarding venues were yet to be made, York had made a significant impression on the attendees.

York Central

During the course of 2018 York Central has turned from an idea into a reality and the council have been instrumental in bringing this incredibly important project forward. The Executive have recommended to Full Council to create the £155m budget to enable delivery of the access infrastructure which will finally open up this site after decades of failure and delay. An outline planning application is being considered by Planning Committee early in 2019 (we are working to a February date) and we also await funder decisions for £77.1m of Housing Infrastructure Funding and £23.5m of West Yorkshire Transport Funding. 2019 will continue the momentum with the agreement of a Partnership Agreement with Homes England, Network Rail and the National Railway Museum, which will set out how the partners will deliver the scheme and how the investments made by the council will be recouped. Site enabling works will commence in the Spring with detailed plans for the access road and bridge coming to Planning Committee with a view to commencing the Infrastructure construction in the Autumn. Alongside this the development partners will start formal market engagement to bring forward serviced plots for both residential and commercial development. The council will continue to engage closely with all stakeholders and communities as it develops its plans for maximising the benefits of York Central for the people of York.

York Station Frontage

Big changes are being considered regarding the front of the Railway Station. It has been accepted for some time that the egress particularly from Tea Room Square is not fit for purpose, and the need for Queen Street Bridge expired when the lines were taken away many years earlier. There have been suggestions that a Bus Station should be incorporated, however whilst it is recognised that bus stops and interchanges need to be incorporated, many local routes do not pass the station.

Make it York.

I sat on the selection panel for the new Chief Executive of Make it York. Whilst I welcome the news that York is the second most visited city in the country, in addition to the other awards the city has been given in the past few months, I recognise that the city has issues with behaviour particularly on Saturday afternoons and early evenings, primarily by visiting groups. Discussions with Police and other organisations including train operators are taking place to find solutions to reduce behaviour which is not acceptable in this city.

City Centre

Following advice by the Anti-Terrorist Unit, we are trialling measures to keep residents and visitors safe in the City Centre during the Christmas Markets. We do not take these measures lightly, and appreciate the difficulty that traders, blue badge holders and others may experience, but safety must remain our biggest concern, although a balance between the threat and common sense needs to be sought.

LEP Review

Following the Government's proposal not to allow councils to be members of more than one LEP, the Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership and York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Enterprise Partnership each approved mergers at recent board meetings. Under the proposed mergers, York and North Yorkshire combine with West Yorkshire to form a single LEP, creating a new body covering a population of 3.1 million people and an economy worth £70.3bn.

East Yorkshire indicated that it will join the Humberside LEP, reducing the effectiveness of our present arrangements. CYC did not want to lose our position within the Leeds and West Yorkshire LEP, resulting in the situation that currently talks are taking place regarding the amalgamation of the West and North Yorkshire LEP Boards. It is recognised that the governance of any new Board will have to protect York's position, but talks are still at an early stage.

Bootham Hospital

We continue to develop the city's plan for the Bootham Park Hospital site. Our review began with a wide-ranging debate involving local people and stakeholders. Over 2,000 comments have been received and will help to shape our proposal of what should happen next for this historic and significant site.

The early consensus that is emerging is that some element of continuing health care use should be enabled; the provision of affordable housing including health key worker accommodation should be achieved; the green open space in front of the main building is highly valued and effort should be made to preserve it and make best use of it. Plans for the site could also allow connectivity across the site – north to south and east to west – to be improved. A range of uses for the historic buildings including care apartments for the elderly, medical training, hotel, mixed commercial and community uses could also be considered.

We continue to lobby the Department for Health to support a joint development of this site and to this end I have written to the newly appointment Minister of State for Health to put forward our position and to request a meeting to press our case. I am pleased to report that this meeting has been granted and I am grateful for the help of both of both of our MPs.

Local Plan

The York Local Plan was submitted for examination on 25th May 2018 and two Inspectors were appointed – Simon Berkley and Andrew McCormack. An initial response was received from the Inspectors on 24th July 2018 which contained a number of questions and points of

clarification relating to the issues of housing need, housing supply, greenbelt and infrastructure.

A response was sent to the Inspectors on 13th November 2018 and published on the York Local Plan examination webpage. You can view the response in full along with the enclosures in the examination library at www.york.gov.uk/localplanexamination. In relation to housing need, the response highlights the new national datasets that have been published recently and confirms that in order to achieve a robust and up to date Plan the implications of the Government's emerging position should be clarified and understood before a final housing figure is settled through the examination process. It indicates that the council will conduct this review and update the Inspector on its conclusions early in the New Year. The response also suggests that in these circumstances, and given the central importance of the housing figure, the most expeditious way forward would be to timetable hearings specifically on housing need as soon as possible and in advance of other matters, since other aspects of the Plan, such as greenbelt and infrastructure delivery, may require reconsideration as a consequence of determining housing need. We have asked the Inspectors for their views on this approach; if they are in agreement there would be a statutory notice period of 6 weeks prior to any hearing session taking place and regular updates will be provided on the local plan examination webpage.

Outer Ring Road Upgrade

The current programme to increase capacity of the A1237 is making good progress. The £38m WY+TF scheme to upgrade 7 roundabouts is due to be completed by March 2022. The enlarged Wetherby Road roundabout will be fully opened in December 2018 (all lanes now in use). Work on Monks Cross is due to commence on site in early 2019. Design work is ongoing for the remaining roundabouts with the expectation that planning applications for Haxby Road and Strensall Rd would be submitted later in 2019 for commencement of construction in early 2020. Subject to approval by the Council's Executive an application for funding for the dual elements of the A19 to Little Hopgrove section estimated to cost £28m will be submitted in December 2018. Depending on the early integration of the dual and roundabout schemes the aim is complete the combined (£60m) project by 2023. Work on identifying

funding for the next phase of dualling over the River Ouse and East Coast Main Line is ongoing.

Scarborough Bridge

Work has started on the £4.5m scheme to provide a 3.5m wide footbridge with new ramps and steps to cater for the 3,000 people who cross the river at Scarborough Bridge. This will provide a step free cycle/pedestrian route between the station and the north side of the river which will be unaffected by high river levels. The site has been cleared of vegetation and piling work is currently being undertaken on Saturday nights. The main bridge is being fabricated off site in Glasgow. The existing bridge will be removed and the replacement lifted in using rail cranes in February. The scheme is currently on programme to be completed in mid March.

Devolution

The Northern Powerhouse Minister has indicated his wish to move the decision forward and the present situation is that arrangements are currently under way to hold meeting with Yorkshire Leaders. However, despite sending him evidence supportive of Devolution, we are no further forward.

Councillor Ian Gillies,

5 December 2018