

## Leader's report to Full Council 15<sup>th</sup> July 2010

### 1. Headquarters Update

The new Headquarters proposals from York Investors LLP received planning permission on 24<sup>th</sup> June and this marked the continued progress of the project. There will need to be consideration by the Secretary of State for Listed Building Consent which should be dealt within a month. The business case for developing versus the 'stay as we are options' remains favourable and demonstrates an aspiration with More for York to save the council tax payers money. It will also deliver a very sustainable building in an historic setting.



The timetable remains as;

- Planning approval: **June / July 2010**
- Contractor appointment: **September 2010**
- Start on site: **December 2010**
- Building Completion: **September 2012**

### 2. Sports Village Pool

In my last report I said that that expected to be able to report to council on a way forward in the summer, and I am pleased to record my thanks to the University of York team, and City of York Council officers that proposals have been brought forward which make possible the delivery of the publicly accessible pool. I am grateful to those officers and councillors who have assisted the progress to this point. This proposal represents good value for money from council tax payers.



Working with the University of York we have the opportunity for achieving a competition standard pool in the city. On the left is the artists impression of the proposed building.

### **3. Barbican**

Following the procurement process which has seen considerable interest in the Barbican detailed proposals for uses of the site were received in June. These two options will be considered over the summer before a recommendation is made to the Executive in September. Each bid will be assessed against criteria which will look at the financial aspects, business case, and the quality of the plans, and the range of conference/entertainment provided.

### **4. New School Meals Contract**

On the 27<sup>th</sup> April the Executive approved the awarding of the School Meals catering contract to ISS Facilities which saw a wide range of factors included in the decisions leading to final judgment including staff training, food safety systems, menu selection, nutritional analysis, customer care and Best Value initiatives. The winning company has a commitment to Marine Stewardship fish, Fair Trade ingredients, and local sourcing of food.

### **5. More for York : Children's Social Care and Finance**

The Executive received an update report on 11<sup>th</sup> May on the progress that has been made with the More for York programme.

In the heavily regulated and rigorously inspected area of children's social care, any changes must be carefully prepared and handled with sensitivity. This blueprint seeks to achieve such changes, having considered the advantages and risks in each area of work. The delivery of children's social care is a changing area and – in some areas – for example that of the increased use and recruitment of foster carers – City of York Council is ahead of the game. Like other Local Authorities numbers of Looked After Children have been increasing. To mitigate this increase, there is a need for a continued focus on early intervention for those children who may be at risk to ensure that reducing numbers of children come into local authority care. There is also the need to continue to cater for those who are looked after who may wish to stay with their foster families after 18, perhaps whilst going on to further and higher education.

The establishment of a 'single front door' is important in ensuring that children and families who need services can access them quickly and easily and a conference will be held to launch this approach next month. Flexible and adaptable services are needed, both from the LA as well as its multi-agency partners, delivering an integrated approach.

The Blueprint for Financial management is targeted to deliver an annual efficiency saving of £170,000 whilst also producing performance improvements. The council will benefit from a more corporate assessment of financial management so that costs are examined right across the authority.

The Executive believe that changes need to be made without compromising quality and the blueprints set out seeks to achieve this whilst contributing to the council's efficiency savings and service improvements.

## **6. High Speed Rail**

The Executive did consider a report on a review of the proposals for a High Speed Rail link. This may remain a long term ambition, which in the current economic climate will extend even further into the future. However, there still remains a need for York to see improvements to the 'classic East Coast' line, and improvements to the Transpennine line extending to York to benefit the city's transport links. I shall be pressing for both of these key transport policies.

## **7. Footstreets Review**

Like some unusual planetary alignment there is interplay between the LTP3, Local Development Framework, City Centre Area Action Plan, and the Renaissance review. The consequences of this will impact on the speed of progress on changes to the pedestrian areas of the city centre and the council has already a major commitment to Deangate as part of the Minster Revealed project. Support was given by the Executive to the request from local traders for the part pedestrianisation of Fossgate, and to the removal of 'street clutter' or unnecessary signage in the pedestrian area which does not enhance the appearance of the city centre core.

A trial will be made of a cycle route through the city centre which will improve connectivity for cyclists whilst taking into account concerns from the more vulnerable members of the community.

## **8. York Mystery Plays 2012**

The history of the mystery plays in York stretches back as far as 1300. In 2004 the future of the mystery plays in York was agreed on a rolling two year cycle. The York Guild's mystery plays on wagons have been produced every four years with the highly successful production in 2006 which will continue to be supported by the council this year. In 2008 the council and partners delivered the York Youth Mysteries.

2012 presents a real cultural opportunity for the City. The figure head Olympics will be backed by a commitment to deliver a cultural olympiad which runs along side the Queen's diamond jubilee celebrations. In York we will be celebrating 800 years since the signing of our city charter.

This report recommends that we take this opportunity to deliver a truly international standard production of the Mystery Plays performed in the Museum Gardens. The ruins of St Mary's Abbey were used for most modern productions between 1951 and 1988 but have not been held there since 1992.

This Mystery Plays have significant financial benefit to the city, with an estimation that the 2000 Minster plays had a value of over £1.6 million to the local economy. Beyond the purely financial and cultural benefit, the tradition of the mystery plays is one of real community production, with a small number of high-profile actors supported by a wider cast of community performers. This will help us draw together performers of all ages and backgrounds to deliver an international event that is still unique to York.

By having a seat at the partnership we can ensure that a number of free places offered through schools for York schoolchildren, as well as a number of discounted

seats for York residents in the interest of accessibility and social inclusion are included in the business planning. I wouldn't like to tie them particularly to our funding as I think we need to allow the partnership to offer, at least the school children's places, as a sponsorship package, as has been the case previously

Executive agreed the reallocation of funding that will be essential in delivering the plays and allowing the partnership to lever in the necessary additional funding to meet the estimated £800k costs of producing this world class event.



I am sure that Members will also be looking out for the Guilds Plays on Wagons this year on 11<sup>th</sup> July and 18<sup>th</sup> July. Regrettably after having participated in the previous three cycles of productions due to pressure of time I shall not be taking part this year having played Isaiah, St Peter, and an unnamed Apostle.


## **9. World Heritage Site Bid**



*World Heritage Status Bid Launch 10<sup>th</sup> June, Mansion House*

The Executive has supported the application for the historic city centre and its underground archeological deposits to be included in a bid for World Heritage Status. An application was made to the Government for the 11<sup>th</sup> June deadline.

## 10. Climate Change Framework and Climate Change Action Plan For York

	<p>On 8<sup>th</sup> June the Executive approved the consultation documents for the Climate Change Framework (2010-2015) and the Climate Change Action Plan (2010-13) which has now been launched publicly. Details are available on the council's website at ;</p> <p><a href="http://www.york.gov.uk/environment/sustainability/climatechange/2framework/">http://www.york.gov.uk/environment/sustainability/climatechange/2framework/</a></p>
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The framework identifies ten key areas for focus, creating:

- Sustainable homes
- Sustainable buildings
- Sustainable energy
- Sustainable waste management
- Sustainable transport
- Sustainable low carbon economy
- Low carbon lifestyle
- Sustainable planning and land use.
- Sustainable WoW – illustrating the climate change work they are doing as a partnership
- Prepared York – how we start to prepare and adapt our infrastructure, services, homes and businesses for a changing climate.

This is a key project to engage with the public on the Without Walls plans for the whole city to reduce carbon emissions. This will also encourage the creation of more 'Green jobs', reduce heating bills and help to tackle fuel poverty. As part of the Without Walls investment in home insulation the Locality Based Scheme has been operating in Hull Road and Fishergate Wards which were identified as the areas of greatest potential for energy efficiency improvement in the previous Private Sector Stock Analysis. I joined the team for one afternoon's session to see how progress was being made



Works through this particular scheme have been completed in 248 households with more in the pipeline. It is estimated that the loft insulation work (either top-up to 270mm or areas starting from scratch) will save 2,320 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> (lifetime savings) and another 1100 tonnes from cavity wall insulation. The key installer is a local company Solarwall thus helping to deliver more jobs in the city.

*Home Energy Checks can be completed with the residents to see what work can be achieved through the scheme.*

Help for all residents across the city is still available from the local Energy Saving Trust Office in George Hudson Street (run by Sustainability for Yorkshire – formerly Ryedale Energy Conservation Group) on 0800 052 7496 or via the web at <http://www.sustainability4yorkshire.org.uk/>

At the same meeting the Executive considered the development of a low emission strategy for the city. One of the unintended consequences of a national drive to reduce carbon emissions from vehicles is that some other emissions have not been reduced as quickly as anticipated. Therefore a combined analysis is needed, and in January 2010 York and Leeds successfully bid to become one of three 'Regional Champions' groupings tasked with rolling out low emission measures at a regional level. As 'regional low emission champions', York and Leeds will be expected to roll out low emission measures within their own areas and encourage other local authorities and organisations to do the same.

Officers were asked to bring forward a timetable for the early introduction of a LES in York with details of how the funding arrangements for this would operate.

## **11. Year End Financial and Performance**

That the council has finished the year at a figure under the budgeted outturn is a major achievement given the pressures on the budget from the numbers of children in care, demands from adult social services, and issues relating to the recession which have all required considerable efforts by all departments. The worst winter in 30 years also took its toll in terms of increased levels of expenditure and the aftermath on the city's roads. Therefore I would like to register my thanks to all council staff, and councillors who have worked together to achieve this outcome under pressure, and with many predicting that there was going to be a considerable overspend.

Officers will maintain the level of attention of detail to expenditure both great and small, and to ensure that all line items are challenged. I would like to thank the Chief Executive, the Director of Customer and Business Support Services (Resources) and

the rest of Senior Management Team, and their staff for all the steps that have been taken, with at the heart of the budgetary control there being a determination to ensure that vulnerable residents did not see a reduction in service despite the scare stories from Opposition Councillors. The More for York Programme has changed attitudes within CYC, we will have to become a different council.

Key issues have been to have Directors directly involved in keeping as many support packages within the city as possible.

## **Performance**

It is clear that much of the bureaucracy surrounding indicators will be removed, this will allow the council to concentrate on those which are of meaning to the public.

- Overall recorded crime in York reduced by 24% in 2009/10
- Pupils achieving 5 or more A\*-C(including English and Maths) improved to 59% - moving York to top quartile
- In terms of inclusion the proportion of pupils living in the most deprived wards in York increased GCSE attainment by 7%
- The number of serious injuries and deaths on York's roads reduced by 38%
- York's unemployment figures are much lower than the national and regional averages.
- Staff Absence figures were 12.2 days per employee in 2002/3 and so the current level of 8.98 days represents a saving of around £2 million not taking into account savings in overtime and temporary staff to cover for absent employees.



*Aim Higher Awards 17<sup>th</sup> June – recognising the drive for greater motivation of young people : Gavin Cowley(Deputy York High School) and Cllr Carol Runciman*



*'Choose to Re-use Fashion Show', York Racecourse 28<sup>th</sup> May – demonstration of fashion from local charity shops, and from local new designers*

- The number of children in care stands at 225 representing a 35% increase since March 2008 which a scrutiny report showed has been part of a national trend following changes in court decisions after the 'Baby P' case.
- The figures for NEETS (young people Not in Education Employment or Training) has not met the target, however, York has the lowest number in the

North of England, and nationally only 14 council areas have lower levels. Steps are being taken by York College to support more apprenticeships.

- The numbers of York households in temporary accommodation continues to reduce despite the national increase in home repossessions. The performance of 79 in 2009/10 was a 67% decrease since 2007/8. York is a regional champion for homelessness.
- York households are throwing away less waste ( waste minimisation is by far the cheapest option and is higher up the Reduce/Reuse/Recycle hierarchy. So the amount of waste thrown away per household has dropped from 663kg in 2007/08 to 614 kg in 2009/10. There was a reduction of 2,400 tonnes in waste sent to landfill.
- Satisfaction levels with cleanliness 70% (compared to 47% in 2002/3)

## **12. Corporate Strategy Update**

Whilst there is a continuing review of the burdens on local councils from central government we need to keep a watching brief on this area, and it is due to come back to Executive on 7<sup>th</sup> September.



*The revitalised York Central Library has become the much brighter York Explore – thanks to a joint investment plan from the council and Avivia. It opened to the public on 22<sup>nd</sup> May and has been very popular with user numbers showing a significant increase already*

The Administration is committed to;

- maintaining high levels of employment,
- good quality schools and training in the city
- providing high quality public buildings (Energise, York Explore)
- helping all residents to reach their full potential and tackling inequality
- working with the Police and Safer York Partnership to reduce crime, and the perception of anti-social behaviour
- improving the sustainability of the city – reducing energy consumption and tackling fuel poverty





*Operation Spoke – Cycling Tagging*



*Promoting City of York Council Apprenticeship Scheme*

Each Executive member has been involved with the Year 2 refresh strategy and will be working to ensure that these deliver a real difference to the lives and opportunities of people who live in the city.

### **13. Council Housing Funding CLG Consultation**

The Executive believes that the funding of national schemes for council housing which sees £6 million of York tenants money leave the city each year as unfair. Therefore the council will give a strong response to the consultation from CLG to make the case that if there has to be debt transfer that it is done in a way which is equitable to York, and ensures that in the long term there are resources that can be utilised to the benefit of York tenants. This could provide much more funding for energy conservation in the city.

### **14. Round up of activities**

The council has been working hard to support families caught up with the problems surrounding the Jarvis closure particularly through Future Prospects, and I have met with managers from Network Rail to push the case for former employees.

The Official opening of Goodricke College took place on 28<sup>th</sup> April with the Duke of York, and marked the latest stage in the development of Heslington East.

The Global Day of Prayer was celebrated on 23<sup>rd</sup> May and after venturing up to the city's walls with the Civic Party and Members of Parliament there was a very varied service in the Minster during which support was shown for the work of the council.

The new Visitor Information Centre opened on 27<sup>th</sup> May and has been a fantastic boost to the city. A wider range of services are available, and in a more accessible building than De Grey House. On the day before I was invited by the Dutch Embassy to the launch of their Business Support Office for the North of England, and

arrangements are being made for a visit by the manager in September to meet York companies, and visit the Science Park.

I visited the new CEMEX plant on James Street which has relocated from Leeman Road and heard about the considerable efforts that have been made to recycle materials, and preserve water. They also had on display one of their lorries that has been fitted with extra mirrors and sensors to improve safety with cyclists.

An international conference on moving towards more sustainable forms of transport "Car Free Cities" was held in York between 28<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> July and recognised the work that has been done to reduce dependence on the car in the city.



*Future Prospects at a York College hosted even for Jarvis employees*



*New high quality home in Morrill Close in partnership with Yorkshire Housing (official opening 10<sup>th</sup> May 2010)*

Like many former railway employees in the city who had worked at Main HQ I have been into see the Cedar Court Grand Hotel which has been fitted out to five star standard. It hosted the meeting of the Economic Forum on 10<sup>th</sup> June.

I attended the York College Construction and Engineering Open Day on 3<sup>rd</sup> June at which the council had a stall detailing the apprenticeship opportunities within the council.

The new Joseph Rowntree School won an award at the York Design Awards on 30<sup>th</sup> June held at York St John's University De Grey Court building which had won the previous year. Along with a number of councillors I attended the public opening of the school on 11<sup>th</sup> May.

I would like to thank officers who have worked to promote links with the armed forces. There have been number of parades recently with the Yorkshire Regiment's new colours, and more recently Armed Forces Day held in York on 3<sup>rd</sup> July. These have allowed residents to show their support at these difficult times for the Armed Forces.

Cllr Andrew Waller  
Leader, City of York Council