

Interim Deputy Leader's Report

Cllr Andrew Waller

1) York Central and Castle Gateway Sustainability & Public Engagement

As part of the recent decision by the Executive to proceed with the western access road into the York Central Development site, the focus on sustainability will be an important feature as we look to press ahead on drafting a planning application. A large amount of environmental, transport and air quality information was provided to inform the decision making of the Executive.

It is essential that York Central is a sustainable major development, as well as delivering much needed housing in York. We will work to improve flood defences, air quality, and ensure we do not overburden existing infrastructure in the area. In conjunction with this, the retention of open space is an important factor in how we ensure the York Central development remains sustainable in the City.

Furthermore, it was also agreed at that Executive that further work will be done to explore options of district heating (through work with Leeds City Region) and renewable energy on site, increasing our chances of delivering a suitable and sustainable major development for the City.



There has been positive engagement through the mycastlegateway process and this has seen a large number of residents and organisations engage with the development of the masterplan for this part of the city, which contains a range of important historical landmarks.

Working with water is becoming a key theme of the development and links very strongly with the engagement on the Five Year Flood Plan for the city. I did attend some of the weekend engagement talks on the weekend of 25th and 26th November. I very much hope that many of the features for engagement can be applied to the York Central process going forward, in order to ensure a fully sustainable development which will work in harmony with the city.



Public consultation on the future of Castle Gateway

2) Flooding preparedness

There have been a number of meetings and drop-in sessions regarding local flood defences around the city, with the commitment by the Environment Agency to provide more. I attended the session on 27th November at Clementhorpe Community Centre and met with Environment Agency Offices and representatives from Yorkshire Water (see below), whose infrastructure will have an impact on future river defences in the area. A Hub Centre on Wellington Row will shortly be opened by the Environment Agency to enable ongoing engagement with the public on schemes which are being developed in the 29 flood cells.



Clementhorpe Community Centre Environment Agency Public Drop in- and with Yorkshire Water

At my recent Executive Member Decision Session on 4 December, the topic of flooding preparedness was discussed and the Environment Agency presented their quarterly update of the Five Year Plan. A number of wards made representations at the meeting for flood defence and gulley cleaning. A formal request was made to the Environment Agency to review their proposed timetable for projects to speed up delivery of protection.

As we were reminded at the end of November, flooding remains a significant problem for many communities. Over the last two weeks in November, I attended the training session for Ready for Anything volunteers at the Eco Depot on November 25th run by Janet Thompson from CVS, Katie Fisher and Alex Brown from the council Emergency Planning Team.



It is vital that the Council takes an active role in work with bodies such as the Environment Agency, Yorkshire Water and York CVS, to develop local coordinated responses when emergencies of flooding occur.



Ready for Anything Volunteers running through training and examples of preparations by Eco Depot Staff

I would encourage all councillors to spread the word on volunteer sign up, as it was one of the key learning points from the 2015 Boxing Day Flood to have better coordination for the voluntary effort which follows on from any event (this is not only connected with flooding). Residents can sign up via CVS or the website

<https://www.yorkcvs.org.uk/ready-for-anything/>

3) Fracking and Minerals and Waste Strategy

On the 23rd November, I visited Kirby Misperton to observe first-hand the activities at the Fracking site. A large amount of policing is taking place at the location, which has been visited by representatives from all parties. The size of the development is astounding in the countryside and there is significant concern about what this will mean for the City of York. I have asked for information on the consequences of the granting of licences within the city's boundaries.

On 28th November 2017, the Minerals and Waste Joint Plan for North Yorkshire, York and the North York Moors National Park was submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for independent examination.

To access the Minerals and Waste Joint Plan Submission documents, and a range of supporting material, please visit the Examination website: www.northyorks.gov.uk/examination.



Frack Pad at Kirby Misperton

4) Support for Independent Retailers

A new retail unit has been created for micro-businesses and independent retailers to use in the heart of the City. The new unit has been created from previously empty Council owned premises on Silver Street and with recent renovations, the unit has been restored and divided, so small independent retailers can take full advantage of the excellent location.

It is important that the Council continues to work with the BID and the retail forum to utilise its assets, particularly those that are not in use, and work to support small enterprises in York.

5) Acomb Jobs Fair

I was delighted to attend the Acomb Jobs Fair on the 15th November, an event that was well attended by members of the public, with over 200 people having attended the event by midday. 28 employers were in attendance to help support local communities with assistance with job searches, composing applications and accessing vital training. This had been organised with the support of York Learning and 4Community GrowthYork, the latter providing a range of services around communities in most need in the city and successfully applying for grant funding to enhance provision of support.



Jobs Fair at Acomb Parish Hall 15th November

6) Indie York

I also attended the successful launch of York Business Week for Indie York. This excellent event championed the unique independent retailers that provide York with a distinctive cultural offer. It was also pleasing to see that many independent retailers have branched out beyond the City centre and onto the Front Street.

As previously touched upon, it is crucial that independent retailers are supported by the Council, in order to protect and enhance York's reputation as an attractive visitor destination.

7) Universal Credit

The Chancellor's recent announcement regarding the delivery of Universal Credit is welcome, however, we remain live to the issue and we will continue to monitor its impact here in York. Universal Credit is an extremely important issue that directly impacts many here in York, so it is vital that the delivery of Universal Credit is appropriate and that there is adequate support for residents during the time that their benefits are being processed.

Cllr Andrew Waller
Interim Deputy Leader