

## Report to Full Council from the Leader of the Council

---

### **New Budget – Areas of Investment:**

The new budget proposals will act as a ‘mid-year’ budget to kick start new initiatives to improve the Council’s frontline services, to work with communities and support our ambition to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. The budget will use contingency funding and an underspend from the current year, as outlined in the Council’s most recent Finance and Performance report, enabling renewed focus on the services which matter to local residents.

The new budget proposals will help tackle issues such as graffiti, enhancing the environment, greater community engagement and road repairs. Funding will also be used to support Children’s and Adult Social Care services, so the Council can continue to protect the most vulnerable in the city.

Some of the key proposals to be agreed include:

- £47K to tackle graffiti on private premises;
- £66K to create a Carbon Reduction and Sustainability Officer and capacity budget;
- £43K for new recycling, litter and dog waste bins;
- £250K to create a new Safer Communities Fund;
- £2 million for road maintenance, improvements to footways and investment in the city’s pedestrian and cycle infrastructure;
- £250K for new play equipment in new and existing play areas;
- £325K for Children’s Social Services
- £10K to ensure all care leavers in their first year of leaving do not pay council tax;
- £385K for Adult Social Care Services;

## **York Central:**

York Central has taken another significant step forward, following the Government's decision to reject an inquiry into the decision to grant outline planning permission.

The 45 hectare site is one of the largest brownfield sites in northern England and provides a huge opportunity for the creation of new housing, including affordable homes, commercial space, a range of public spaces in the city and sustainable transport links. York Central will be another landmark in York's rich history and developing future.

The outline masterplan has been developed in conjunction with residents and communities, utilising the innovative 'MyYorkCentral' consultation process at the centre of shaping the plan. As a new administration, we will seek further improvements to the development with partners, particularly pushing for clean growth, sustainability and ensuring affordable homes are delivered.

## **Council Plan:**

Since the new administration was formed, a significant amount of work has begun to develop the new Council Plan for the next four years. Currently, a draft structure showing the key outcomes for the city over the next 4 years has been created and consultation is being planned over the summer period to gather views and evidence on how the city can work together to achieve these outcomes. Taking this feedback into account, the final version of the plan will return to the Executive and Full Council in the Autumn.

## **Devolution and LEP Review:**

Following the Government review of Local Enterprise Partnerships, there has been ongoing discussions regarding the merger to create a LEP covering York, North and West Yorkshire. These discussions continue to take place, including with West Yorkshire Combined Authority, Leeds

City Region LEP and York, North Yorkshire and East Riding LEP. We are determined to reach the best deal which reflects York's strategic importance to the region.

It is unfortunate that there is to be an imposition of simplistic requirements on complex economic boundaries, as it is not necessarily in the best interests of our businesses, our councils and our communities.

Linked to this, we also continue to be supportive of the efforts across a number of partners and local authorities to secure a One Yorkshire devolution deal, in order to achieve the best deal for York.

### **Regional Climate Emergency**

Following the annual meeting of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA), a new climate emergency has been declared for the region, following on from York's own declaration last year, which was supported by all political groups. I attended the meeting of WYCA on behalf of York, in order to support the motion to declare a region-wide climate emergency and formally give York's support to reducing carbon emissions.

WYCA's new declaration will now work to support the region's ongoing commitment to become zero-carbon and deliver the new Energy Strategy and Delivery Plan (ESDP), which aims to drive forward clean growth.

### **The Local Plan**

Planning inspectors have asked for a six-week consultation period before examining the entire plan at public hearing sessions later this year, following the removal of the Strensall Barracks site from the Plan.

This consultation will allow residents, businesses and community groups to once again have an opportunity to comment on York's draft Local Plan.

The Council's Executive agreed to submit the new evidence and modifications on Wednesday 7 March. The submission covered:

- Removing housing site allocations at Queen Elizabeth Barracks, Strensall and Land at Howard Road, Strensall), formally revising the Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAN) from 867 to 790 dwellings in York each year for the duration of the plan.
- Amendments to the greenbelt boundary have also been proposed, in order to take into account recent changes such as planning decisions in York and the removal of the Strensall Barracks site.
- The removal of site allocations - totalling 550 dwellings - follows a recent visitor survey commissioned by City of York Council, supported by Natural England, which highlighted that there would be significant effects on the integrity of the Strensall Common, a protected site, if the proposed housing sites adjacent to the Common remain in the Local Plan.

### **Transforming Cities Fund Application**

York has submitted, with partners, a new business case for the Transforming Cities Fund to Department for Transport. If successful, the Transforming Cities Fund will help us connect our communities to employment centres, helping residents to access skills and opportunities through high quality sustainable transport infrastructure.

The project will also will contribute to our target to become a zero carbon economy by 2030, by creating an attractive alternative to car use, through bus quality improvements and investment in walking and cycling infrastructure.

## **Hyper-Hubs funding**

Plans to develop rapid charging points, otherwise known as Hyper Hubs, have been approved by the Council's previous Executive, in order to increase electric vehicle infrastructure across the city. Hyper-Hubs will be developed at both Monks Cross and Poppleton Park & Ride sites, utilising £800,000 of funding from the Office of Low Emission Vehicles and £700,000 from the European Regional Development Funding.

The Hyper Hubs combine solar energy harvesting and storage with electric vehicle charging points, reducing the reliance on the UK electricity grid to charge electric vehicles, whilst simultaneously reducing harmful emissions. Each site will see a solar canopy built over an estimated 100 car parking spaces, with a number of rapid charging points in situ. Each charge could take as little as 15 to 20 minutes.

## **'Kick the Habit' Air Quality Campaign**

New anti-idling measures have been introduced at the Council as councillors look to strengthen the city's approach to improving air quality. The 'Kick the Habit' campaign was launched early in June to encourage more people to consider air pollution in the city and improve our local environment.

The campaign, which will support the incoming Clean Air Zone in January 2020, will prompt drivers to switch-off their engines when parked. Authorised council officers will also be 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.

## **Armed Forces Day**

A series of events took place between the 24<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> June to celebrate local armed forces personnel, former and currently serving, here in York.

The Mansion House kicked-off the celebrations with the annual flag raising at 11am on Monday 24 June, followed by a speech from the Rt Hon Lord Mayor of York, Cllr Janet Looker.

Armed Forces Day took place on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> June and residents, visitors and local businesses gave their thanks for all the hard work and contributions made by the armed forces community.

### **East Coast Mainline**

As the Leader of the Council, I have written to the Secretary of State for Transport to raise concern over the timing of engineering work on the East Coast Main Line later this summer. Although the overall investment is very welcome, planned upgrades to Kings Cross Station will cut off the route from London to North Yorkshire over August Bank Holiday and a number of business and tourism leaders have expressed alarm at the planned work on one of the busiest weekends of the year.

I have asked the Department of Transport, when planning any works of this scale, to consider the potential risk to cities like York and consult with us at an earlier stage, in order to identify possible mitigations.

Cllr K Aspden

9 July 2019