

Report to Full Council from the Leader of the Council

Council Budget

A considerable amount of work is taking place to set the 2020/2021 Council budget. This year, the budget setting process has been brought forward to allow councillors and residents to have a longer period of time to read the budget papers and have their say on the administration's proposals.

A number of decision sessions will be held by Executive Members in January, in which they will discuss and agree, for Executive, their relevant sections of the 2020/21 Council Budget. This will provide an earlier chance to speak on the draft budget proposals before they are sent to Full Council for consideration.

The decision sessions will take place on the following dates:

Portfolio(s)	Date
Leader + Finance/Performance	15/01/20 – 5.30pm
Children & Young People + Culture, Leisure & Communities	14/01/20 – 4.00pm
Health & Adult Social Care	15/01/20 – 12pm
Housing & Safer Neighbourhoods	16/01/20 – 2pm
Economy & Strategic Planning + Environment & Climate Change + Transport	13/01/20 – 5.30pm

Devolution and LEP Review

Discussions around devolution continue to take place with a wide range of stakeholders across the region. As ever, I am continuing to seek a set of arrangements which recognise York's links north and

west, whilst simultaneously pushing the need for us to work collectively as a region to achieve the best for our residents.

One Yorkshire scale remains the best outcome for York. However, the Government continues to communicate that they require smaller interim arrangements on the journey towards wider devolution.

Artificial boundaries are unhelpful and any future arrangements must allow York to work with all our regional partners, on the issues that are best addressed regionally.

The future LEP arrangements are, of course, linked to potential devolution. York, North Yorkshire and East Riding, and Leeds City Region LEPs continue to work together to ensure we can secure future investment for our region.

Transforming Cities Fund

Alongside our partners in the Leeds City Region and North Yorkshire County Council, I am pleased to report that we have submitted our bid to the Department for Transport for the Transforming Cities Fund.

Our submission, if successful, will:

- Transform access for our communities of persistent poverty to employment opportunities and skills centres;
- Create smart, clean and liveable places which make cycling and walking the obvious choice for accessing town and city centres – improving air quality and reducing car dominance;
- Transform the public transport and active travel offer from housing and employment sites, ensuring that people are enabled to make sustainable travel choices from day one;
- Make travel by bus an attractive and more reliable offer for commuters.

A 21st century transport network is key to creating economic growth around the region, helping our residents to access employment and wider education opportunities. If we are successful in our bid, our proposals will deliver a real step change, connecting people to economic and education opportunities through affordable, sustainable transport.

The Local Plan

The public examination of the draft Local Plan is currently underway and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Planning Inspectors, the Programme Officer and our Council officers for carrying out the work behind the scenes to get us this far and in facilitating the hearings.

I would also like to thank everyone who has taken part during the public examination process, as it is of course important that residents and groups are able to feed into this important strategic plan, which will drive future growth the city.

The Council is keen to adopt the Local Plan and begin to implement policies that will benefit the city and achieve our aspirations: to build more homes, create a sustainable city, foster new communities and ensure the special character of York remains protected for many years to come.

The Community Stadium

I am pleased that LNER have become the main corporate sponsor of the Stadium and that from now on, the Community Stadium will become the LNER Community Stadium. This new sponsorship deal will help ensure that the LNER Community Stadium remains financially sustainable for years to come.

York has a proud connection with the rail industry, and it is entirely fitting that such a large rail company based in the city would put themselves forward to sponsor the Community Stadium.

With the Stadium due to open early 2020, it is an exciting time in the development of York's Community Stadium, and although I completely understand the frustration caused by delays in its completion, it will be an excellent venue for all residents and visitors to enjoy.

The Guildhall

Works to restore the historic Guildhall are now underway. Vinci, the contractor appointed to carry out the restoration works, are now making preparations to install a crane at their river site.

These works mark the first major restoration to the Guildhall in 60 years and in turn, will restore the Guildhall's role at the heart of York's civic, social and economic life.

Once the works are completed, it will improve access to the building, providing residents a greater opportunity to step inside and see the Guildhall. Crucially, it is estimated that the Guildhall project will provide a £117m boost to our local economy by providing office space to give new companies room to grow in York.

Children's Social Work Academy

The Council's new Children's Social Work Academy has now been up and running for over a month now. The academy provides a bespoke 12-month learning and development programme for all social workers joining York's Children's Services team. With three cohorts per year, the academy will ensure high standards in social care practice, enabling our social workers to develop their skills, knowledge and professional confidence.

The academy is open to those returning to social work after a career break, newly qualified social workers completing their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE), as well as social workers who are new to City of York Council.

The social workers have initially taken part in two weeks' induction and training as a group before joining one of the council's Children's Services teams. The academy groups will come together every three months to share their experiences, reflect on their learning and carry out more specialist training.

York Learning inspection

York Learning was recently visited by Ofsted as part of a full inspection into the service. Overall, I am pleased to say that the service was rated 'good' by Ofsted, with particularly positive feedback on the coordination of the curriculum, strong partnerships between key organisations and also robust leadership and management of the service.

New Director of Governance

I am pleased that, following an extensive recruitment process, the Members Appointment Sub Committee appointed Janie Berry as the new Director of Governance at the Council. This post will also become the Council's Monitoring Officer.

Janie was recently working for Derbyshire County Council as Director of Legal and Democratic Services and will start work in mid-December. This is a fantastic appointment for the Council and I would like to take this opportunity to wish Janie all the best in her new role.

Suzan Harrington will continue in the interim Assistant Director of Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer until 31 December 2019. Suzan is continuing to do an excellent job in ensuring the Legal and Governance activities of the Council are running very effectively, and I would like to thank her for her significant contribution to the Council.

New Chair of Make it York

It has been announced that Greg Dyke, former Director General of the BBC and Chancellor of the University of York, has been appointed Chair-elect of Make It York, succeeding founding Chair, Lady Jane Gibson.

It has been proposed that Greg will lead Make It York's Board of Directors as the company continues to evolve, following the appointment of new Managing Director Sean Bullick at the beginning of 2019.

Greg's experience in a variety of key areas, his knowledge of York, and his networks nationally and internationally will be enormously helpful to Make It York and to the city. I am looking forward to working with him in promoting the city to investors and helping York to continue in going from strength to strength.

The Council's approach to equalities

The Executive have agreed a new series of recommendations to improve and strengthen the Council's approach to equalities in the city. The decision, taken by the Executive on Thursday 28th November 2019, will result in a stronger and more consistent approach to supporting equalities across both the Council and York itself, particularly through the introduction of a new action plan.

MOD Gold Award

The Council was recently awarded Gold Award in the Ministry of Defence's Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS). The award is the top accolade an organisation can receive and acknowledges the contribution the authority makes in going the extra mile in support of the armed forces community.

It was a privilege to attend the award ceremony at the National Army Museum on 12th November. The Council is only the seventh employer in the whole of the Yorkshire and Humberside region to have won the award, which was launched by the Government five years ago.

Council Constitution and Governance Review

As most members will know, the Council is undertaking a review of the Constitution. The initial consultation period for councillors was due to run until 29th November 2019, however, this was extended until Tuesday 31st December 2019, in order to give councillors more time to have their say.

Residents need to be confident that decisions taken at the Council are evidence based and considered openly and accountably. Good governance is essential to ensure decision-making is effective and therefore, the Council must regularly review its governance arrangements.

This review will undergo a programme of consultation with the Executive, members of Council, officers, the public and partners to understand how the different structures impact on their engagement with the Council. This feedback will then be used to form a set of recommendations to the recommendations to the Executive, Audit and Governance Committee and to Full Council.