

Report to Full Council from the Deputy Leader

As I write this report it is not known whether Boris or Jeremy will be leading the country forward and the first day of the Local Plan inquiry is just taking place. In both instances, the question of Housing provision and more specifically affordable housing are key to the debate, along with Planning for a sustainable future, within the context of the climate emergency. The cross-party Climate Change Scrutiny Committee and this administration are both working towards an action plan to cut emissions from council activities – everything from investing in low emission new fleet, building new zero carbon houses, increasing insulation, building electric charging points to increasing provision for pedestrians and cyclists.

While the Leader has been restricted in public activities by purdah rules I have represented the authority where needed and chaired the Executive Meeting in addition to dealing with issues within my portfolio and working up budget proposals which will be publicly available well in advance of final budget decisions in February.

The temporary anti-terror measures protecting the Christmas market have inevitably caused some concern, although visitors largely seem to accept them as being comparable with such measures in other major UK centres. In many ways we have to acknowledge the ‘no win’ reality that such measures have been strongly advocated by the security services since Oct 2018. The permanent measures will be installed next year, with a system in place to enable permitted access for emergency services and other authorised services through video and intercom connections. We will also work closely with the Minster to look at robust measures that might be incorporated with changes coming forward as part of their neighbourhood plan for the Minster precinct and Duncombe Place.

One of the ‘casualties’ of the security measures combined with the later hours for the Christmas Market has been the impact on Shambles Market traders effectively facing being ‘locked in’ until 8pm. Executive members worked behind the scenes to broker a meeting between Make it York, councillors from the ruling coalition including myself and the opposition together with the market traders. Cllrs Waller, Craghill, Dave Taylor and Ashley Mason made representations to Make it York following protests by the market traders leading to a reviewed risk

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assessment and a compromise arrangement enabling traders to leave from 6pm onwards in a safe manner. There is a commitment from Make it York to establishing a consultative forum which I would hope will be able to avoid such situations arising in future years.

As a council nominated director of the Business Improvement District (BID) I attended a recent presentation outlining the work over the coming year leading up to the renewal vote. Early discussion has taken place about the focus for the new 'prospectus', options for size of business to be included within scope and scale of the levy required. All businesses and organisations in the BID area will be engaged in the process and have the opportunity to shape the ambition for its work in future.

Castle Gateway planning applications are now live for consultation in respect of the St Georges Fields multi storey car park, Castle Mills site accommodation and the new pedestrian and cycle bridge over the River Foss. These are all linked to the exciting prospect of enhancements to the whole area around Clifford's Tower with the removal of the car park, extension to Castle Museum, internal works to the tower and the creation of public open space. As work continues along Piccadilly this new area of the city centre will provide opportunities to spread the focus beyond Parliament St and offer new and exciting reasons for residents and visitors to spend time in our fantastic city centre.

Transport issues are never out of the headlines for long in York, and residents continue to engage with the issue on both local and citywide level. I have met with York Civic Trust, York Environment Forum Transport Group and York Bus Forum representatives and been updated on their citywide transport consultation. In recent months the annual round of parking restrictions has been through one of my 'decision sessions' allowing individual representation on each location. Officers are now working on these along with the next batch of residents parking zone requests. The Executive recently gave approval to work on streamlining the administration of parking services and issuing of respark permits. Over the coming year we will see provision to allow monthly payments and online administration with a gradual shift to card and phone payment for city centre parking. With additional staffing I am hopeful that we will start to see more timely processing of new areas being added to respark zones to tackle the growing challenge of commuter parking in residential areas. I very much hope to be able to work with ward councillors and organisations such as York Hospital and

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University of York to reduce congestion problems as well as the pain for residents in nearby streets.

Ward funding for highways, walking and cycling is being allocated in consultation with ward councillors and I am working with officers and Cllr Smalley to try to ensure our systems are working effectively so that this money can be spent for the benefit of local residents, but linking in to any wider council priorities. As discussed at the recent Economy and Place scrutiny committee, we do face a challenge in the state of roads and footpaths in spite of additional investment from this administration. This is by no means unique to York with government funding failing to match up to the impact of wear and tear on our highways. I very much hope that the new Highways Asset Management Plan will allow a more transparent process through which officers and members can deliver improvements for the benefit of residents across the city. I continue to respond to residents' concerns about everything from bus timetables to cycle routes, potholes and parking and hope to shortly bring forward details of several schemes that will complete missing links on the strategic cycle network. I am also pleased to see several routes being treated in icy weather for the first time ever although we still have a long way to go to ensure that they are all swept and cut back to provide high quality all year round walking and cycling routes.

In the coming year I would expect there to be significant consultation on the refreshed local transport plan that looks forward to seriously tackle congestion, developing modern public transport and enhancing the cycle network as well as creating a more people-friendly residential environment for more of our residents. I would also expect to see more activity focussing on residents and businesses making imaginative use of public spaces – Micklegate, Fossgate and Bishy Road have their events to build on, and other areas of the city such as the Groves could be doing more of this to foster community and celebrate car free events

Our bus-based Clean Air Zone is due to come into effect from next month, although difficulties within the bus industry have delayed the supply of the new double deck electric vehicles which will start appearing in service shortly. The first of the single deck buses in the new dark blue livery is in service and I will be watching closely to see how quickly we can achieve 100% low emission vehicles on the park and ride service. I am also aware of the need to promote evening services more effectively in conjunction with operators (through the quality bus partnership), parish councils and York Bus Forum. Although not strictly

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my portfolio area I am keen to keep up the anti-idling message for bus stops, coach parks, outside schools, and taxi ranks, both from the perspective of health but also cutting unnecessary burning of fossil fuels and CO2 emissions – To achieve 13% year-on-year reduction to work towards our 2030 target is going to be a real challenge so we should start with quick wins such as turning engines off!

Cllr Andy D'Agorne

Deputy Leader