



Cllr Mark Crane

Leader of the Council

Report to Council on 24 April 2018

This report covers the period from the Council meeting on 12 December 2017. During this period I have attended a number of meetings on behalf of the Council. Reporting on key items:

District Council Network

I have continued to attend the District Council Network representing the views of District Councils nationally and our area. I have recently been given a portfolio role for the DCN for Stronger Economies. This role will include responsibility for economic development and housing issues so I will be drawing on the expertise of my colleagues on the Executive, our excellent work on the Economic Development Framework and on the experience gained from the Programme for Growth.

Devolution to Yorkshire

I have continued to attend meetings regarding a potential devolution deal for Yorkshire. As yet we are still negotiating with government and amongst ourselves as to the exact details of the freedoms and financial benefits that could be devolved to the region and on the governance framework for a Yorkshire Combined Authority. I will continue to report progress on these matters as it is made.

Housing Infrastructure Bid

As previously reported to Council, we were successful with the bid for money from the Central Government Housing Infrastructure Fund (Marginal Viability Fund) for Olympia Park. We are now in a period of 'due diligence' and have submitted a range of supporting information to Homes England. This information is now being assessed to confirm the grant award and we are expecting to hear in May/June.

Meanwhile Council Officers are working with those representing the 3 land owners of the site to develop a comprehensive masterplan and bring forward planning applications covering the full site. It is hoped they will come forward later this year.

Councillors will also be aware that the County Council submitted a bid to the Housing Infrastructure Fund (Forward Funding stream) for a range of sites in the Selby District. This was the first time that a bid of this nature had been made by the County

Council for sites in just one of the District Council areas. This is a direct result of the close working of our officers with the County Council under Better Together on the local and regional growth and housing agendas.

That part of the fund was only open to upper tier and unitary authorities and had a two stage application process. As with the marginal viability fund, the number of councils and total amount of the bids exceeded the available funds. Unfortunately despite our support and that of the LEP the County bid has not been selected to progress to stage 2.

This is obviously disappointing. However both this Council and the County Council will continue to explore opportunities to bring funding into the district to support our shared ambitions for inclusive growth and our corporate plan priorities.

That shared working will continue following the appointment of new Head of Service for Economic Development and Regeneration. Julian Rudd will be joining us shortly from a role at Ryedale District Council. In that role he has been seconded part time to the North Yorkshire LEP. In his new role with Selby Julian will continue to work 2 days a week with the LEP helping to give Selby a greater voice and level of influence in regional matters.

Better Together – Legal Services

In March 2018 the Executive received a report on the legal shared service pilot that was agreed in April 2017. The results of the pilot were broadly positive; showing increased resilience for the District as part of a larger legal team but also bringing benefit to the County in terms of commercial property expertise which supports both our agendas.

Executive agreed to transfer 4 members of the legal team to NYCC and buy back the equivalent number of legal hours from the expanded county team. Following consultation with the staff, that transfer took place on 1 April. The District Council has retained the post of Solicitor to the Council plus two legal training posts on its structure and the solicitor will monitor the arrangements with County to ensure we get a value for money service. Executive asked for a report back on how the arrangements are working in 12 months' time.

Councillors IT kit and the general data protection regulation.

Last year Council agreed to purchase IT kit for councillors to enable us to work in 'paper light' way and have a secure selby.gov e mail address. The roll out of equipment is almost complete.

The Council has also recently installed new software to manage Council meetings and agendas which will make it easier for councillors to access and annotate agendas and papers and refresh the Councillor pages on our website. This will include better ways of registering our interests and noting committee places and attendance at meeting. This system will be rolled out in May and training will be provided for Councillors.

The new equipment will also ensure the Council is compliant with the new General Data Protection Regulation which will be in force on 25th May. A training session will take place on GDPR and how it affects Councillors on Tuesday 8th May at 5pm in the Council Chamber.

Planning Enforcement

I am aware that planning enforcement issues are matters which councillors regularly hear about from their constituents. Under the restructure last year we increased resources in this area however the Council has struggled to recruit.

I have asked to meet with the Chief Exec and relevant officers to look at the service and to consider whether we need to do things differently or increase the resources available.

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Mark Crane
Leader