



## Councillor Christopher Pearson

### Executive Member for Housing, Health, & Culture – December 2020

#### **Housing**

The Housing Team have continued to offer support to tenants throughout the pandemic. We suspended formal rent recovery action and spent time supporting those tenants who were experiencing difficulties paying their rent because of a loss of earnings or due to self isolation or illness. The Team provided advice and assistance on Universal Credit and on wider benefits to help tenants maximise their income to help prevent rent arrears building up.

We have continued to advertise and allocate our properties through North Yorkshire Home Choice and we have recently let six newly acquired properties that were purchased through the Empty Homes Programme. The programme is supported by funding from Homes England of £39,000 per property and the properties purchased have now been added to our Housing Revenue Account. Four of the properties purchased were in Tadcaster and a local lettings plan was put in place to give priority to applicants with a connection to Tadcaster or the surrounding villages. All the properties have been let at an Affordable Rent.

#### **Visitor Economy**

A significant amount of work has been underway to attract local visitors to our high streets and to our district wide offer to enable people to explore in these difficult times.

The Scrutiny Committee have recently heard about the great work on the visitor economy strategy and a Member's webinar will shortly be available for the council to understand more of the incredible progress achieved and the plans for the next year.

I send my utmost congratulations to the Community, Partnerships & Customers service, Selby Abbey and the range of partners who came together to deliver Selby950. The programme was awarded Bronze Award in the White Rose Tourism Awards for Best Arts & Culture against some tough competition across the region. It is also with special thanks to funders: the Arts Council, National Lottery Heritage Fund and Drax Power for their collective £135,000 investment in the programme against the District Council's Programme For Growth investment of £50,000. In response to this, this Council has agreed further investment into arts and culture over the next 3-5 years through the funding agreed at the September meeting. We shall use this funding to engage investors further in a series of activities that will be designed to engage local people, develop the creative sectors and embed

Key highlights from the last two months include:

- **Three themed Selby District Trails have been developed** – Escape in your own back yard (Nature & Wildlife Trail), Your Home's History (Heritage Trail) and Young

– at The Heart of Yorkshire (Family Adventure Trail). These aim to encourage residents and visitors to explore the District and experience our must-see landmarks and attractions, focusing on landscape, green open spaces, heritage stories and family adventure. They will be available in various forms and are available to download via the Selby District Council website.

- The trails are being launched with a new campaign: **HOME at the Heart of Yorkshire**. This campaign includes advertising on 5 buses (various routes across the District) and on the billboards at Selby Station and on the A64. Partnering with digital platforms such as Selby, Tadcaster & Goole (STAG) Mumbler, has achieved encouraging results, with advertising resulting in over 1 million impressions, a reach of 52,000 via social media channels and 4,000 visits to the dedicated 'Home at the Heart of Yorkshire' page on the website.
- **MonsterVillain Safari – Halloween Trail**. We brought the MonsterVillain Safari to the high streets of Selby, Tadcaster and Sherburn – a trail of “monsters” in shop windows, which families were encouraged to collect, using the individual QR codes, instead of trick or treating at Halloween. The trails were successful and well-received by businesses, so we're currently looking at implementing the Christmas version, as another way of bringing people to the high street. If this isn't possible, due to restrictions, we will look to move the plan to February half-term or Easter, as appropriate.
- **Shop Local Campaigns** - We're looking at how we can encourage residents to support local, shop local and enjoy local, as well as highlighting the online offer, via ShopAppy. Similar to the Home at the Heart of Yorkshire campaign, activity will include digital advertising, social media, local press and a partnership with STAG Mumbler.
- **Visitor Economy Advisory Board (VEAB)** is in place, with 12 members from across the District, who represent accommodation providers, visitor attractions and hospitality businesses. The group will meet on a monthly basis initially to identify how the sector can best be supported and developed.
- **Development of the visitor destination branding** for the District continues. A 'Brand Council' has met (with representatives of the VEAB, key stakeholders (including the LEP) and local businesses). There will be wider consultation with the sector and council representatives as the work develops.

#### **Visitor Economy Sector Support during Covid:**

- The Tourism Development Officer continues to work closely with individual VE businesses to help with queries concerning the local restrictions support grant, and anything else they may need support with. We reach out to over 100 visitor economy businesses with relevant news and advice. Individual enquiries from over 45 businesses have been received and actioned since May.
- **Welcome to Yorkshire** - Regular meetings are scheduled with Area Director and we continue to feed content into campaigns, to ensure the District is accurately represented. WTY provided support to amplify our Home at the Heart of Yorkshire campaign messages and posted about the Selby District trails on their Facebook page. The post reached around 20,000 people and enjoyed some fantastic engagement, with 527 likes, comments and shares. The Chief Executive of

Welcome to Yorkshire is due to visit the District in the New Year to meet sector business representatives, as well as senior leaders at SDC. He aims to understand the needs of the sector and the area.

### **Contracts**

We have taken delivery of the final new refuse vehicles during November to complete the delivery of a brand new fleet for Selby District. Staff at Amey have worked closely with officers to ensure the new service has been delivered smoothly and the mobilisation of the new vehicles was seamless. This has been a massive change to a frontline service that affects every household weekly and I would like to express my thanks and gratitude on behalf of the Council to all the Staff at Amey and our officers for their commitment and dedication in managing this change for our customers.

We have recently procured a contract for garden waste composting by a number of organisations that replaces our existing contracts ending on 3rd November. The new contracts provides service continuity for our garden waste collection service providing local processing facilities that minimise travel from the collection rounds to the processing facilities.

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