



Councillor Mark Crane

Leader of the Council

Report to Council on 18 February 2021

This report covers the period from the Council meeting on 15 December 2020. During this period I have attended virtual Executive meetings and represented the Council at local, regional and national virtual meetings including YNY LEP Board and YNY Infrastructure and Joint Assets Board. I have also attended meetings of the COVID outbreak planning board and a number of District Council Network events.

Vaccination Centre

The NHS approached SDC about the feasibility of using the Summit building as a mass vaccination centre for the people of Selby District. Officers have worked closely with NHS and Inspiring Healthy Lifestyle staff to agree the terms of use, including remedial work required within the Summit building, for a quick mobilisation. Final agreement was reached on 27th January for the NHS to occupy the building from February with vaccinations starting in early February.

Leisure Services and the Summit

I presented a report to the Executive setting out the options for the future of Leisure Services and the Summit facility following extensive dialogue and negotiation with the contractor Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles (IHL). The impact of the Covid pandemic on the provision of leisure services both locally and nationally has been severe. It was understood that the Leisure Services provided by IHL to the District could not be sustained due to the commercial risks associated with the Summit and, that at the present time, seeking an alternative provider was not a credible option. The negotiated settlement that has been agreed in principle retains IHL as the provider of the Leisure Contract and releases the Summit to be used as a mass vaccination centre for the District. The long-term use of the Summit facility remains under consideration and further options will be brought to the Executive once it is no longer needed as a vaccination centre and there is a better understanding of the leisure market post COVID.

COVID

The work relating to the COVID pandemic continues to be a priority to keep our residents and businesses safe. We have been working hard to reduce the number of cases in the Selby District and the numbers are now going down.

LEP Board

At the LEP board meeting on 22 January 2021, it was a pleasure to meet Helen Simpson who will take up her role as the new chairman of the LEP Board in March 2021. £6m has been committed to the A19 works which was confirmed at the meeting.

Council performance

Executive considered quarter 2 (Q2) performance in December. It is pleasing to note that, despite the challenges of the pandemic, performance continues to be strong in a number of key areas. Processing of planning applications significantly exceeded target in Q2 – early signs are that performance continued to be on or around target in Q3. Q2 performance on re-purposing empty homes and processing new benefit claims was also strong. Whilst performance on dealing with complaints wasn't as strong in Q2, it has improved in Q3. Staff sickness has reduced for six consecutive quarters.

The suspension of all but emergency repairs due to the coronavirus outbreak continues to severely impact performance on housing repairs – including void times – that this has continued to be the case into Q3. Income collection rates for Q3 are likely to be slightly down on expectations, although payments made in the final week of the year will be reported in Q4 so the actual figures will be slightly higher.

Local Government Reorganisation

An emailed letter was received from MHCLG, to the Chief Executive, on the 8 February. The letter stated that Ministers are currently considering which proposals for Unitary government should be included in the consultation, which is expected to start in mid February. The details of the consultation are being finalised. Statute requires that before implementing any proposal received in response to an invitation, the Secretary of State must consult any principal council affected by that proposal that did not submit the proposal and any other persons he considers appropriate. A list of possible consultees were included. I will give a verbal update to Council if there is any further information to share.

Thank you

I would like to express my thanks to officers for all that they are doing through the pandemic, sustaining performance in the majority of areas whilst also picking up new responsibilities as part of the Covid-response. I would also like to thank the staff who have worked really hard during the recent flooding events to keep our residents and businesses as safe as possible.

Mark Crane
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