



**Councillor Christopher Pearson**

**Executive Member for Housing, Health, & Culture**

**Report to Council on 13 April 2021**

**Contracts**

I was advised earlier this year that Amey plc had accepted an offer for the environmental services arm of their business from a Spanish company called Urbaser Ltd. The Council conducted a due diligence exercise to ensure the novation of contracts protected the Council and service delivery which was completed at the end of February. You may have noticed the vehicle fleet livery reflects the name of the new company working in partnership with Selby. The purchase of the business from Amey plc has no impact on service delivery or the contract with Selby District Council.

**Waste**

Detailed consultations have opened this week on two aspects of the Governments Resources and Waste Strategy which was published in 2018. These are [Extended Producer Responsibility](#) and [introducing a Deposit Return Scheme](#). I will be working with Officers on how the Council can respond to the consultations by the deadlines of 4<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

**Visitor Economy**

**Sector Support, Industry Support Webinars and Virtual Networking**

We continue to support local tourism and hospitality sector to prepare for the reopening of their businesses. Two free webinars for tourism and visitor economy businesses in the District were held on 16<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> February, to complement the series of industry support events, funded by the Reopening High Streets Safely fund, for retail and hospitality businesses. All of the webinars were well attended. Individuals representing 12 different visitor economy businesses attended the tourism webinars.

The first 'Talking Tourism Virtual Networking Event' was held on Monday 22nd February. This was an informal virtual meet up providing the chance for businesses working in tourism, hospitality and visitor economy to come together, hear from each other, support each other, exchange practical information, ideas and experiences. The first session was well attended. This event is to be held regularly, every six weeks guided by the sector-led Visitor Economy Advisory Board and with topics selected by the businesses.

**Heart of Yorkshire Destination Branding, Marketing Plan & Delivery**

Members were invited to a recent webinar to get an update on progress with the Visitor Economy Strategy and development of the districts' destination brand for our tourism and hospitality sector.

The marketing and promotions plan will build on our successful 'HOME at the Heart of Yorkshire' campaign and outline the overarching activity and individual campaigns that will take place over the next 12-24 months.

It will include new photography and a number of themed/seasonal campaigns. The creation of a new destination website will provide the sector with a collective voice and support them through the upcoming phase of reopening and recovery. It will provide the tools and resources needed to communicate with local audiences; to reinforce all that's great about our district and position it at the forefront of audiences' minds, whilst thinking ahead and planning future days out.

The brand will be rolled out across the sector over the coming months, in line with Covid-19 recovery and to aid the reopening of the high streets and the visitor economy. We're hoping to have the website available from May onwards, with promotional activity starting as soon as it is appropriate for us to do so. The work is planned to align closely with the town centre action plans.

### **Refugee Resettlement Scheme**

The Home Office's Global Refugee Resettlement Scheme is expected to recommence shortly, and refugees will start to arrive in North Yorkshire for resettlement. In January 2020 Selby agreed to participate in the new scheme, as part of the wider North Yorkshire Resettlement Scheme, but any resettlement was put on hold due to the global pandemic. Between July 2016 and July 2017, seven refugee families (32 persons) were resettled in the Selby district as part of the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Scheme. All seven families that have been resettled in the Selby district have chosen to remain in the area and several of them are now in work or undertaking work experience.

Selby District Council has now committed to finding suitable housing for approximately six families (29 persons) that are expected to arrive in the Autumn of 2021. We will be responsible for identifying suitable properties to be used for resettlement and for arranging for those properties to be furnished ready for their arrival. When determining the suitability of the property consideration will be given to demand for housing, what is available at the time as well as the specific needs of the family.

### **New government changes to Right to Buy under Section 11(6) of the Local Government Act 2003**

The Government has introduced a package of new measures to support Local Authorities as housing deliverers to help increase the supply of affordable and social housing. The new measures relate to the use of the Right to Buy receipts that are retained by the Council and the key changes will support our development and acquisition plans and reduce the risk of any receipts returning unspent to central government.

One of the key changes made by the government is the extension of the time available to retain the receipts and now all Right to Buy receipts can be retained from 3 years to 5 years which will help with larger and more complex development projects.

To strike a balance between increasing flexibility and avoiding administrative complexity, the government intends to raise the cap on the cost of a replacement affordable homes (to include social and affordable rent) that can be financed by Right to Buy receipts from 30% to 40% across the board.

There will then be a further cap to be introduced 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 on using receipts for acquisitions; but instead of a cost restriction on individual units, this cap will be a

percentage of a local authority's total delivery each year using receipts. The Government acknowledges that some local authorities receive low levels of receipts from Right to Buy sales and may find it more difficult to deliver replacement properties through new build therefore the first 20 units of delivery through acquisition in each year will be excluded for all local authorities.

At Selby we are committed in our HRA Business Plan to one-to-one replacement through purchasing and building new Council Homes to maintain our stock levels and are currently working on a revised Affordable Housing Delivery Strategy which was presented to the Executive on 1<sup>st</sup> April.

### **Fly tipping**

The Council continues to hunt down fly-tippers and is successfully working with private landowners to clear and help prevent further fly-tipping on their land. The Enforcement team, which investigates fly-tipping and is responsible for putting in place preventative measures also has camera equipment to assist with catching offenders, this is deployed at the worst hot spots. The Enforcement team continue to work with the Police, Environment Agency and other local authorities to track down the organized gangs whose fly-tips blight our region and those of our neighbouring authorities. Culprits have been punished through the issue of fixed penalty notices and in this working year the Council has issued in the region of 40 notices and these have been used for littering, fly-tipping and Householder Duty of Care (HDOC) cases with the fines ranging from £50 for littering and up to £300 for other offences and will consider prosecution in the most serious cases.

### **Housing Repairs**

Following the presentation to the members of Scrutiny Committee on 25<sup>th</sup> March, officers are working on our post Covid recovery plan.

Members were made aware of the impact of Covid service delivery for Council house due to lockdowns and revised Covid Safe working the number of repairs raised since April 2020 is 15,754 of which 1,383 repairs relating to 924 properties were outstanding on 25<sup>th</sup> March.

Recovery will focus on our internal resource on repairs and utilising additional contractor support to minimise impact on the voids; offering overtime to staff including Saturday working and increased contractor usage. We are also seeking to increase resource to bring the backlog down as swiftly as possible.

- The service structure has been reviewed, grades and T & C's revised to increase capacity to clear the backlog
- We are review risk assessments and safe working practices as the governments roadmap to recovery progresses
- Staff in the service are now tested twice a week
- Staff in the service are being vaccinated a priority workers
- Review individual risk assessments when staff have been vaccinated
- We are recruiting additional staff to clear the backlog and passing work to sub-contractors

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