



## **Councillor Cliff Lunn, Executive Member for Finance and Resources**

### **Report to Council on 21 February 2023**

In my last report to Council, I would like to reflect on my time as Executive Member for Finance and Resources.

There have certainly been some major challenges to overcome for this Council, for local government and for the communities we serve. After economic turmoil in the late 'noughties' and a decade of public sector austerity, and more recently the impacts of Covid and then further economic upheaval as a result of events worldwide, I can say with confidence, that there has never been a more interesting time to be involved in local government finance!

Throughout these times this Council has embraced the challenges, delivered what has been needed, and ensured that our vital public services have continued day in, day out. Whilst we have had our share of difficult decisions and like the rest of local government, had substantial savings to make as central government funding reduced, with our longer-term outlook and the ability to plan ahead, we have been able to manage the reductions without adversely impacting on frontline services.

We have also had some fortune as changes in national funding systems meant business rates from renewable energy operations once destined for central government coffers, have been retained locally. Our Programme for Growth has supported an ambitious agenda to stimulate both local housing and business growth. This has enabled targeted investment across our district, resulting in for example: more affordable homes; investment in our town centres; the redevelopment of the Leisure Centre in Selby town; and the establishment of a legacy grant fund in partnership with the Two Ridings Foundation to support local communities in the former Selby District in perpetuity.

Our approach to financial management has been measured, robust and responsible, and I am pleased that throughout my tenure we have received unqualified opinions on both our final accounts and our arrangements to secure value for money. The finance function has been instrumental in our strong partnership with North Yorkshire County Council, enabling us to punch above our weight, drawing on the specialist expertise of our county colleagues. I would like to thank the Finance Team and our Chief Finance Officer who has supported me, my Executive colleagues and Members across the Council.

As Lead Member for Resources, I have regularly had the pleasure of updating on the significant transformation around IT and digital over recent years. I am particularly pleased that, on my final report, I can confirm that the second and final phase of our new Civica Housing and Assets system – which will include a new online portal for our housing tenants to check their account, pay rent and report repairs - has gone live. This system has been our largest single investment in IT and, I am sure, will underpin service improvements for both staff and tenants for years into the future. I would like to thank the IT and Transformation Teams for their huge efforts in supporting service delivery across the Council and improving the way we work for the residents of the Selby district.

I would also like to highlight the excellent work we have done to support our residents and businesses through the Covid pandemic. Our administration of the various grants and financial support schemes is something I am particularly proud of, and my thanks go to all the Officers involved.

Local government reorganisation has inevitably meant some of our plans have had to be put on hold as we have worked with our colleagues across North Yorkshire to prepare for the new Council. As we pass on the baton, we do so in a strong financial position. Whilst more savings were part of our future plans, these will now be for the new North Yorkshire Council to take forward. However, we can be safe in the knowledge that we have provided sufficient reserves to enable this in a sustainable and planned way; that is the Selby way.

And finally, I hope that those of us who are carrying on in the new authority will continue to help and work for Selby.

**Councillor Cliff Lunn**  
**Executive Member for Finance and Resources**