



Councillor Chris Metcalfe

Executive Member for Communities and Economic Development

Report to Council on Tuesday 26 March 2019

This report covers the period from the Council meeting on 21 February 2019

Economic Development:

Three of the five new economic priorities agreed by the Executive in January 2019 have moved forward to inception and become active work streams in the short time since the Council last met:

- The joint project between the District Council, NYCC, East Riding and Hull for the **M62 Strategic Development Zone Study**, has moved forward with contracts being awarded to Cushman and Wakefield working in partnership with Richard Wood Associates and Fore Consulting. The work will consider options for long term strategic growth in the M62 / A63 / Leeds – Selby – Hull rail line corridor and how the existing strengths in the low carbon energy sector can be expanded. The Study is scheduled to start late March with a final report to the stakeholder group expected during August 2019.
- The District Council is also working with NYCC, with support from their partner consultants WSP, on projects to improve access to Selby station, its facilities and the linkages with the town centre and current and future residential areas, as part of the bid by Leeds City Region to the Transforming Cities Fund bid. Business cases are being worked up for a range of projects and these must be submitted to government by June 2019. The primary focus of the bids will be on the area between the station and the Abbey, together with a new foot and cycle bridge across the Ouse to Olympia Park. Funding will also be sought for other cycleways and facilities for station users.
- The **Sherburn Growth and Infrastructure Plan** will examine how local transport and infrastructure can be improved to provide better links to local employment and growth and strengthen connections with the town. This will be delivered in partnership with NYCC and a project Team met for the first time late February 2019. The meeting agreed a process to take the programme forward defining the project scope; an outline Project Plan and Vision and a stake holder agreement aimed at ensuring the programme embraces the views and opinions of business and communities across area. An agreed Strategy and Action Plan is anticipated for approval in August 2019 with implementation commencing September 2019.

Strategic Employment Sites

There is no new information to report since the last Council report

SME Support Events

The week of March 4th saw the start of the first **Selby District Business Week** which aligned with the National Apprenticeship Week, as a consequence the primary theme for week was: “**Skills – how to future proof your business**”. The Council’s Economic Development team delivered the week’s programme of events in partnership with the LEP’s business and skills support services; private sector providers such as the FSB; North Yorkshire Police; Selby College and business leaders from across the District.

Thursday the 7th of March saw two key events: the Council’s Economic Partnership Forum met at Selby College to discuss the skills agenda with particular focus on growing the Apprentice programme to the release the future potential of the next generation of employees across the District. Attended by business leaders from Selby District’s SME’s, large businesses, Executive members and the local MP it was an important platform to discuss the future of skills growth within the District.

The Forum was followed by a celebration of Apprentice Achievement by students from across all sectors attending Selby College with the first ever Selby District Apprenticeship Awards. Over 50 students were nominated across 7 different sectors plus two overall awards for “Young Apprentice” and “Adult Apprentice”. I’m pleased to say that a Selby District Apprentice, Tom Wilcock, training to be a plumber, won both the Best Construction Apprentice Award and the Young Apprentice Award, an outstanding achievement.

Key statistics for the Business Week include:

- Engaged with 28 new businesses
- 11 themed business events over the 5 days
- 26 service and business support exhibitors attended
- 235 delegates attended the events
- Selby Business Week Communications were ranked 35th and 44th highest of **all** National and Local Government tweets during the period

And what did the delegates think:

“It’s not just words on the banner - @SelbyDC mean BUSINESS - and their business week has been a real help to so many businesses with advice sessions, but it’s not just this week, they offer help all year round.” - FSB Tweet

Future High Streets

At the February Council I reported that work was underway to consider how we can develop a long term future plan for revitalising our town centres and also take advantage of recent funding calls from the Government's release of a £675 million Future High Streets Fund.

As planned, the council has undertaken an engagement approach with local businesses and residents to understand their priorities for the high street. We had an unprecedented response from 108 businesses, 120 on-street residents and 470 on-line residents. High level messages from this are that businesses and residents are proud of their town, its heritage and it's local convenience and that there are local, loyal customers to the high street. However, there are a number of areas to reflect on including, lower than average footfall to the high streets, businesses perception of decreasing trade. Respondents highlighted around greater need for quality retail and activity offers, enhancing a perceived aging, tired environment and the need to open up access and movement in the streets to relieve congestion and encourage easy access. This reflects well with other analysis of the town centre's needs around digital and built infrastructure to bring it forward as a 21st Century market town and place to enjoy life and do business. Findings have been shared with the Selby Town Enterprise Partnership and at the Central Community Engagement Forum as a start of a conversation to work on the longer term vision of how the local town can come together to work on these issues as a strong collective.

The Future High Streets Fund application will focus on exploring the resources needed for the physical and digital infrastructure elements of this work and will align with project opportunities that are being scoped as part of a wider regional focus on the town's rail station as an important transport hub for the town centre and the commuting work force.

Pocket Parks

In January, Selby District Council supported Groundwork North Yorkshire to submit applications for the district's three towns to The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's 'Pocket Parks' fund. The fund was to support local community groups to repurpose or bring back to life derelict or underdeveloped community space into a park/garden environment for all to access. I am pleased to say that Groundwork and SDC's support has meant successful applications from the fund for Sherburn in Elmet Parish Council to develop a plot of land next to the library and community hub, and for Selby Big Local to develop a piece of SDC owned land next to St James Church. This plot will also be used by Selby Abbey Primary School as a community garden. The fund awards totalled £40,000. Although an application to enhance the Quaker Burial Garden at Tadcaster was not successful, Groundwork and local, interested community representatives will look at other opportunities to support this work. This is great news in helping support the 'grass roots' development of our town centre areas to encourage local footfall and activity.

Update on the car park improvement programme

Improvements to Selby Bus Station are now completed. New bus shelters were installed at the end of February. Although replaced on a like-for-like basis (in terms of style), the

replacements shelters benefit from solid roof construction (thereby negating the previous issues of the perspex roof panels which constantly required cleaning), solar powered LED lighting and colour SDC logos.

The car park improvement programme is progressing. Refurbishment works at Audus Street car park commenced on 25th February 2019 as scheduled and are progressing well. There have been a couple of minor issues regarding access arrangements for neighbouring properties which have been addressed. Feedback received thus far via the contractor has been positive.

Works to upgrade the mains power supply to the South Parade car park in readiness for the installation of electric vehicle charging points as part of improvement programme have been completed by Northern Power Grid. The main improvement works to the car park have been slightly delayed in order to avoid any potential clash with the Tour de Yorkshire.

Design works for the remodelling of the Back Micklegate and Micklegate car parks is continuing apace. Initial budget estimates have just been received for the various options and Officers are currently assessing these proposals. Subject to available funding, works are anticipated to commence later in the year.

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