



**Councillor Richard Musgrave, Deputy Leader of the Council**

**Report to Council on 17th December 2019**

This report covers the period since the Council meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2019. During this period I have attended Executive and Executive Briefings, and represented the Council at local and regional meetings including deputising for the Leader as required.

Reporting on the key items:-

**1) Planning Policy**

In September Council gave approval to begin work on a new Local Plan for the District and preparation of the 'Issues and Options Document', which is the first step in the plan, is proceeding well.

A number of workshops have been held with Councillors, Council employees, and key stakeholders and feedback from these meetings have helped to shape the 'Issues and Options Document'. These meetings were constructive and consensual, as was the first meeting of the Local Plan Programme Board.

The 'Issues & Options Document' will be presented to Executive in January, when approval will be sought for a six week public consultation to begin.

The Council has also launched a Call for Sites exercise, in which Landowners and their representatives are encouraged to submit sites for consideration as allocations in the Local Plan. The Council's team is also working closely with North Yorkshire County Council Highways function in Northallerton to commission a District wide transport assessment, which is a significant piece of work that will be a key component of the Local Plan.

Consultation has begun on the draft Statement of Community Involvement the Council's statutory planning document setting out how the Council will meet statutory requirements for engagement and consultation in the planning system. The consultation period will close on the 15<sup>th</sup> January.

**2) Olympia Park**

Since the last Full Council in September, the Council has decided not to accept the terms & conditions of the HIF Grant offered by Homes England. These t&cs only became clear in Summer 2019 and to accept them would have meant the Council would be liable to repay the grant in full if fewer than the 1190 houses were delivered. In my opinion accepting such a risk would have been irresponsible.

The onus is now on the landowners and developer to bring forward alternative proposals for the site, which will be judged on their merits as and when they are presented.

### **3) Development Management**

Sustained progress has been made in the following areas:

In the period between 01.08.2019 to 31.10.2019, 86% of major applications were determined within the statutory period or agreed extension of time (6 out of 7 applications). This is compared with 80% (4 out of 5 applications) in the same period last year. These figures are significantly above the national designation targets of 60% set by the Government.

In the period between 01.08.2019 to 31.10.2019, 73% of minor and other applications were determined within the statutory period or agreed extension of time (117 out of 168 applications). This is compared with 73% in the same period last year (101 out of 139 applications). This represents an improvement in performance when compared to the last report to Council (70%) and these figures are above the national targets set by the Government (70%).

It should be noted that both the application types listed above include allowances for the Extension of Time within the figures. An extension of time allows the timetable for dealing with development applications can be extended beyond the statutory period so long as the council and the applicant agree. Provided the council is then able to meet the new mutually agreed date, an application will be counted as satisfying the timeliness requirement for development applications.

We have recently recruited new officers into two vacant posts which helps significantly with capacity in the team and in continuing to improve performance.

Performance at Appeal is a measure of how successful local decision hold up to scrutiny external to the Council. Performance remains high in terms of winning planning appeals. 3 appeals were determined in the period between 01.08.2019 to 31.10.2019 of all 3 were dismissed. Since April 2019 our Appeal success rate stands at 94% with one decision which was allowed by the Inspector but was in line with the Officer recommendation.

The Gascoigne Wood Public Inquiry ran from the 22<sup>nd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> October and will reconvene for three days from the 8<sup>th</sup> January. The Inquiry will be held at the South Milford Hotel.

On Friday, 4 October 2019, the NSIP application for the Drax Re-power generating station was given development consent by the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. It is anticipated that the applications to discharge the DCO requirements will be submitted soon.

We are continuing to work proactively to improve our Enforcement Service. There are currently approximately 280 open cases. This has reduced from approximately 400+ open cases this time last year. We have also had approximately 105 planning applications submitted in the last year resulting from enforcement cases. The total application fee for these applications is approximately £31,000.

We have also received funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) of £50,000 to assist in work related to protecting the green belt. (MHCLG) have stated in relation to this funding stream that "Effective planning enforcement is crucial to the integrity of the planning system".

**Richard Musgrave**  
**Deputy Leader of the Council**