

LEADER'S STATEMENT

Local Government Re-Organisation

You will know that the County Council's proposal for a Unitary Council for North Yorkshire has been approved by the DCLG for further consultation.

I am pleased that the Government recognised the strength of the case put forward in our bid. The County Council's proposal was judged against five criteria namely

- Affordability
- Cross section of support
- Strategic leadership
- Neighbourhood engagement
- Service delivery

In all five categories the County Council's proposals received the highest possible assessment. Sixteen proposals have been agreed by the Government for further consideration and of those sixteen only three received the top scores in each of the categories mentioned.

Myself and the Chief Executive and Assistant Chief Executive have attended a number of groups of Parish Council meetings in response to invitations received - sometimes from elected members.

The Government's consultation period lasts for twelve weeks and ends on 22nd June 2007. It is open for any individual or organisation to respond to the consultation exercise which is being run by the DCLG directly.

I would wish to emphasise that my approach has been that the County Council will continue to deliver its business as usual whilst the Government reaches its own conclusions on this matter.

Annual Audit and Inspection letter

The Audit Commission presented their annual letter to the Executive on 1st May. It confirmed the County Council's overall four star excellent CPA rating - which of course I was not able to confirm when the County Council last met on 21st February - a day too early! It is a very good report across all the key areas of service improvements, use of resources and governance arrangements. Myself and fellow Executive members are committed to maintaining and further improving on these high standards.