

## NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL 19 MAY 2010

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

#### STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

1. So now we know, the British people have decreed a hung parliament. Before the election all our party political leaders rubbished their opponents' policies. Overnight, on 6<sup>th</sup> May the same politicians with one voice say "We must all work together in the national interest, but of course without giving up the power of political position and patronage".
2. Whilst the national politicians bicker about Britain, we in North Yorkshire must ensure that our business, industry, inward investment and quality of life goes from strength to strength.
3. Your Economic Development & Regeneration Committee has met once on 12 March 2010 since the last full Council meeting. The areas of work that we would like to highlight are set out below.

#### **Committee Meeting: 12 March 2010**

4. The focus of the meeting was to receive a report outlining the framework for economic development in North Yorkshire. The report was presented by Andrew Harper, Assistant Director of Economic and Rural services, and the Committee were invited to discuss and comment on the framework as part of the consultation process.
5. The framework sets out the economic objectives which are relevant to the work of all North Yorkshire County Council Directorates and Services and starts to provide clarification on the most significant economic development priorities and actions for the council. Andrew Harper outlined the different roles that the County Council needs to play on economic development outlining specific functions and the need for the Council to take more of a leadership role supporting and influencing others to obtain the best outcome for North Yorkshire.
6. The framework focused on four key themes: business and competitiveness; skills and employment; accessibility and the environment; and place / regeneration. Detailed discussion took place on the priorities for each of these and the Committee identified a number of areas relating to 'skills and employment', which has been a focus of our work over recent months, that we would wish to examine in more detail. This includes looking at how business works with schools and higher education to ensure that young people have the right skills and we will be interested to look at the emerging work on developing the Employer Engagement Strategy. The consultation process will involve other external partners and the final version will go to the Executive for sign off.

### **Future work and challenges**

7. Looking forward there remain key challenges that need to be addressed in relation to economic initiatives within North Yorkshire.
8. With the complex and changing policy and delivery environment, combined with the uncertainties over economic recovery and the extent to which public funding will be squeezed there is a need to ensure that we have a clear direction of travel and focus. The continuing work on the economic assessment and development of the geographic programme by the York and North Yorkshire Partnership Unit, will underpin the development of a collective Economic Development Strategy for York and North Yorkshire. It is critical that the middle area of the County which falls outside of the City Regions is not forgotten and these areas should have a clear focus and strategy indentified as a matter of urgency.
9. And finally as the late Lord Beaverbrook, Canadian born British newspaper magnate said of Lloyd George "He did not care in which direction the car was travelling so long as he remained in the driver's seat".

**COUNTY COUNCILLOR ROBERT G. HESELTINE**  
**Chairman**  
**Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**County Hall**  
**Northallerton**

**May 2010**