

LEADER'S STATEMENT

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs)

Can I firstly remind members that the LEPs are a Coalition Government policy to replace RDAs including Yorkshire Forward. The LEPs have no money for administration and all projects are subject to a bidding process for the Regional Growth Fund. The first bidding process was many times over subscribed.

The North Yorkshire and York LEP has, after a recruitment process, appointed a Chairman. I am pleased to inform Council the Chairman is Barry Dodd from Thirsk who runs a number of companies both in North Yorkshire and further afield. Under Barry's chairmanship I am very confident of the future of North Yorkshire LEP and I believe it will deliver for the economy of North Yorkshire. The interviews for private sector Board Members took place on 9th and 10th May and the Board is likely to have its first meeting in early June. My personal aim is to ensure that Barry has the freedom to run the North Yorkshire and York LEP in a true private sector manner with the Local Authority Leaders on the Board taking a very supportive but back seat role.

The Leeds LEP held its first meeting on 19th April. The Board consists of nine private sector members including the Chairman and eight Local Authority Leaders for West and North Yorkshire. The two main items for discussion at the first Board meeting were Enterprise Zones and the High Speed Rail. Both subjects I have some reservations about. The Leeds LEP is very large in terms of population and has many competing interests. It is well known that I have some reservations of the value of both the Leeds LEP and the Leeds City Region to the economy of North Yorkshire.

One Council

Colleagues will see in the finance report for this meeting particular reference to the One Council Change Programme that is being implemented across the Council. I want to highlight this is my statement as being of particular importance for two major reasons. Firstly, there is a pressing financial reason to look for every saving that can be made to protect front line services and I hope that this programme will make a major contribution to the financial challenge we will have in years three and four of our four year strategy. Secondly we should never rest on our laurels, we should always be looking for ways to modernise and improve how we deliver services. This Programme will and should challenge existing ways of working and look to simplify, standardise and share the best ways of working across the Council. Given the amount of efficiencies both cashable and non-cashable that we have implemented already and continue to pursue this will not be an easy task but one we need to work on vigorously in the months ahead.

The Executive

We have now reached the mid-point of this Council. I will at the Council meeting announce changes to the membership of the Executive and to the portfolios of Executive members.