

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
18 May 2011**

**TRANSPORT, ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Chairman's Statement

The Committee met on 30 March 2011 and the following items were considered:

1.0 Update from the Corporate Director Business & Environmental Services; David Bowe

The Committee were pleased to welcome Mr Bowe to the meeting and the opportunity to be fully briefed on any issues within Business and Environmental Services. The update included; reassurance that the savings plan was on track; the reduction in bus subsidies and although this is unfortunate the Committee understood the financial pressures on the Council to do so; closure of the Waste Recycling Centres for one day per week has been agreed as a Wednesday from July. Members were keen that this should be well communicated to the public. Efficiencies are already in place for highways maintenance. The recent funding allocation from central government will help to ease the burden the hard winter and increase in pot holes has placed on the Council; There is an allocation of £400,000 allocated to Community Transport and it has yet to be decided how this will be utilised.

It has been agreed with Mr Bowe that he shall regularly attend our Committee meetings to ensure that we are kept up to date on any developments within the service.

2.0 Highways Maintenance – Pot Holes

At our mid cycle briefing the lead members decided that it would be beneficial for members of the committee to fully understand what the County Council is doing to address the issue of potholes around the County.

Mike Roberts explained the different types of road surface that had been used around the County following Government guidance. In some areas the stone mastic asphalt had been used and this had proved not to be as durable as hot rolled asphalt. Members asked whether any lessons could be learnt from those countries that often experience freezing temperatures. In those countries however it is more likely that the temperatures remain constant whilst the problem in the United Kingdom sees a freeze thaw cycle and it is this that causes the cracks that then develop into potholes.

3.0 Economic Development Update

The Committee maintains its keen interest in economic development and the main focus at the moment is the development of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The Committee agreed that it would be useful once the LEP is established to have a meeting looking at this in more detail but accept that it is very early days.

4.0 Biodiversity Update

Some members of the Committee had been involved in a scrutiny review looking at biodiversity with a focus on what we can do in North Yorkshire to encourage the growth of the bee population. (I was interested to hear that every third mouthful of food we take is reliant on bees through the pollination process.) It was encouraging to hear that the project to encourage schools is progressing and that work is also being undertaken to look at what contribution the County Council's tenant farmers could make in this area.

5.0 Flood Risk Management Update

It is very important that the Committee is kept fully briefed on flood risk management as following the implementation of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 the County council is now the lead local flood authority for North Yorkshire.

Mark Young updated us on: national and regional consultation and engagement, policy development particularly the preliminary flood risk assessment and the investigation policy, DEFRA capacity building workshops and resource planning, and a list of 16 items of ongoing projects and reviews around flooding and coastal erosion. With the amount of work that is happening in this area we are grateful that Mark has already scheduled in the Committee meeting in June to allow us to comment on the Flood Risk Assessment and the Investigation Policy.

6.0 Reducing street lighting

Finally the working group (of which I am a member) looking at reducing street lighting in the County continues its work and plans to present the final report to the Committee in June.

County Councillor David Jeffels
May 2011