

Leaders Statement - 14th December 2011

Central Government settlement for Local Government

At the time of preparing this statement the provisional settlement figures have not been provided. The settlement figures are expected imminently and I will update Council accordingly.

Partnerships

The past year has seen major changes in partnership structures in North Yorkshire. The North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership and its six Thematic Groups no longer exist and we no longer have the top down Local Area Agreement. Two important new partnership groups have however been set up the first is the North Yorkshire York and East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership under the chairmanship of Barry Dodd and it is private sector led. The second is the North Yorkshire Health and Wellbeing Board which is a Local Government and Health Partnership. This Board will be chaired by me as the Leader of the Council.

Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board

The Council may be aware that the Health and Social Care Bill 2011 places a requirement on the Council to have in place "shadow" Health and Well-being Board from April 2012. Until the legislation comes into force the Shadow Health and Well Being Board will have no formal legal status but will, in effect, act as a working group. We have now established our Board as required and the Executive agreed its formation at our meeting of the 29th November. Responsibility for leading this work rests with me as Leader of the Council and designated leader of the Board

The Bill proposes that the H&WB will be a committee of the Council. It will be unique though in that its membership will include Officers and representatives of other agencies. We have included in our Board representation from District Councils, the voluntary sector as well as all the Clinical Commissioning Groups across North Yorkshire. We have had the first informal get together of Members of the new Board and are now well placed for the first meeting on the 1st February.

LEP

The York, North Yorkshire & East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership continues to progress its priorities. There will be a media launch of the number of business support initiatives that the LEP is working on in January. It has also been awarded £6.2m from the Growing Places Fund to invest in infrastructure projects. Removing infrastructure barriers will release economic growth. The LEP will shortly be seeking expressions of interest for projects and will focus the investments on projects which will create jobs and stimulate growth. In order to maximise the value of the £6.2m the LEP will also explore ways (for example section 106) where the monies can be recycled to be invested in further initiatives across the LEP area.

It was of course pleasing that one of the County Council and LEP priority areas broadband was mentioned in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement. The Connecting North Yorkshire project was highlighted as good practice. I very much welcome the role of the LEP in the project to help make sure that the benefits of improved broadband connectivity help the County's businesses as well as individual households.

Cllr John Weighell,
Leader of the County Council
6th December 2011