

Leader's Statement

Health and Wellbeing Board

Since my last Leader's statement the Council's newly formed Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board has met for a second time. These new arrangements appear to be bedding down well with a constructive relationship developing between the GPs leading the Clinical Commissioning Groups and representatives from the County Council. The Health and Wellbeing Board has started to progress the development of a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for the County area which will lead to establishing our health priorities. The Board is also addressing key areas of work such as the integration of health and social care. Clearly, this is a time of enormous change within the health sector at the moment and we as a Council are focussed on helping our health colleagues on broader issues whilst at the same time preparing for our own important change of taking responsibility within the County Council for public health.

North Yorkshire, York and East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership

Another key partnership area is the North Yorkshire, York and East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership. This particular partnership has now been up and running for one year. I am a member of the LEP Board and my view is that this has been a successful first year overall. The Partnership is well led and has very strong engagement from the private sector. A number of work areas are being developed although with the significant handicap of a lack of funding in comparison to some other more urban areas in the country. As with many issues that the County Council is engaged with it is often necessary for us to "punch above our weight" to be heard on regional and national issues. There will be a review of the LEP and its future priorities in the coming months. In addition of course we continue to work actively within the Leeds City Region LEP.

The North Yorkshire Economy

As well as the LEP focus on the economy in North Yorkshire, we as a County Council, are also separately aware of the difficult economic climate that exists at the moment. A recent report to the Executive Committee sets out how the County Council is seeking to support both businesses and individuals. I very much welcome the fact that we as a Council have also put some additional funding into two areas which will have a beneficial impact on the economy. These two areas are Highways maintenance, where we have been able to allocate an additional £2 million. The second area is the area of apprentices where we have allocated a further £400,000 which will in effect double the number of apprentices that are employed by the Council as well as providing some additional support to other employers who are take on apprentices. The funding for these two areas has been found from additional savings that we will make this year. This is an indication of the progress that the Council has made on its savings programme and the strong management of our financial position at a difficult time.

County Councillor John Weighell,
Leader of the Council.