

## Leader's Statement

### Local Enterprise Partnerships

Over recent weeks there has been quite a bit of activity in relation to the Local Enterprise Partnerships. This has largely stemmed from new arrangements that the Leeds City Region is seeking to put in place in order to attract further freedoms and flexibilities from Government under its City Deal proposals which were the subject of a ministerial announcement on 5<sup>th</sup> July. In particular Leeds City Region is looking to put into place further governance arrangements through a "Combined Authority". It is proposed that the Combined Authority provides another tier of governance arrangements for transport and possibly in the future for skills and for those Councils who wished to be a member of the Combined Authority it would control in particular strategic transport planning and have the ability to raise revenue through a levy on the public in all member authorities. It is my view that North Yorkshire County Council should not be part of these arrangements, our transport issues are different to those of West Yorkshire and we have an obligation to deal with transport for the whole of the county area. I would not wish to subject North Yorkshire tax payers to potential levies from yet another tier of Government. I have discussed the situation with Greg Clark who is the Minister for Cities with responsibility for the City Deal who fully understands the County Council's position. I have also been making the case to the Minister about the importance of ensuring that there are opportunities for rural areas as well as for Cities in terms of economic development and regeneration.

### Health and Wellbeing Board

Since the last County Council meeting there has been a third meeting of the newly formed Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board. The Board continues to develop, with good engagement from the new Clinical Commissioning Groups. The main focus of the recent Board meeting was the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment of the health issues across North Yorkshire. The document that was agreed by the meeting contains a wealth of important information that will help the Clinical Commissioning Groups to plan services over the coming years. North Yorkshire is often characterised as having a relatively healthy population. Whilst that is true there are still important issues for the county to address. It will be one of the responsibilities of the Health and Wellbeing Board to look at how these issues are dealt with by all partners working within the new health system. Again the discrepancies in health funding between urban and rural areas need addressing. For example Barnsley receives over £420 per head of population more than North Yorkshire. I am pleased by an announcement from Andrew Lansley recognising that problem. I believe the formula should be based on population demographics and not on deprivation as at the present time.

### Performance

At the Executive meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> June we considered the end of year performance reports for 2011/12. I want to take this opportunity to very publicly thank staff across the County Council for the consistent high level of performance demonstrated within this report. I am far from complacent about performance, and there are always areas where we can improve more. However, the last year has been challenging in terms of coping with reduced funding and many restructures that have had to take place which always has the potential to distract from performance. This does not seem to have happened in this Council and once again I am grateful for the efforts of everybody from across the Council.

### Yorkshire Forward

On 30<sup>th</sup> June my commitment as a Board member of Yorkshire Forward ended after 5½ years. Yorkshire Forward was seen as the most effective of the Regional Development Agencies and although I personally think it could have been more efficient and less extravagant, the fact that it invested more than £300m per year into the region's economy will be greatly missed. Its support in North Yorkshire for Tourism, Business Link, Market Town Initiative and Renaissance Market Town as well as many individual projects will leave a huge gap for both community groups and businesses in North Yorkshire.