

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

12th November 2014

STATEMENT OF THE LEADER COUNTY COUNCILLOR JOHN WEIGHHELL

Local Government Yorkshire & Humber

I have updated colleagues previously on the situation with LGYH. The organisation which represents councils in Yorkshire and Humber along with some other public sector bodies is facing abolition. A number of West Yorkshire Councils have indicated that they do not see a future for the organisation. Key meetings are due to take place in the next month and if no resolution is found to keep all Council's on board, then the organisation could be wound up next year.

Local Enterprise Partnership

Following the LEP's successful Local Growth Deal, when it secured around £110m, the Government has indicated that there will be a further, although much smaller, second round of growth deal funding. The amount for the LEP area is thought to be around £6m and projects are currently being assessed for possible submission. It is expected that any announcement will be made by Government in the Autumn statement.

Devolution

Following the Scottish referendum, there has been considerable interest in devolution, with the major cities at the centre of the debate. I have signed a letter along with other County leaders from the County Council Network, that has been sent to the Prime Minister. I have also separately written to William Hague. The purpose of these letters whilst being supportive of devolution for cities makes it clear that this agenda should also include counties. I am sceptical of another regional tier of government as a means of achieving devolution but I strongly believe that there is scope to devolve functions currently carried out by Central Government either to LEP or to the County's as well as to the City's. This is likely to be a major area to debate as we lead up to, and beyond, the next general election.

Tour de France

Following the staging of the enormously successful Grand Départ in North Yorkshire, Officers have been finalising the financial outturn for the Tour de France. I am pleased to be able to report that the operations within North Yorkshire have come within the budget that we had previously announced. Around £4m was funded on Highway improvements which was achieved by bringing forward works scheduled in future years. In addition, we had budgeted to spend approximately £2m of revenue in staging the event which ran across North Yorkshire for both Stages 1 and 2. The outturn position is that we have come under this budget by approximately £300k.

Once again I would like to take this opportunity to thank everybody who made this event in Yorkshire, and in particular in North Yorkshire, such an amazing success.

Lord Lieutenant

On the 12th of September, Lord Crathorne's term of office as Lord Lieutenant came to an end. I would like to place on record the County Council's appreciation of Lord Crathorne's 14 years as the Queen's representative in North Yorkshire.

I am also personally thrilled at the appointment of Barry Dodd as the new Lord Lieutenant. I have worked very closely with Barry firstly on the Board of Yorkshire Forward and latterly as Chairman of the North Yorkshire, York and East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership.

JOHN WEIGHELL
Leader of the Council