

North Yorkshire County Council**15 February 2017****Transport, Economy and Environment
Overview and Scrutiny Committee****Chairman's Statement**

1. My statement for this full council includes details of the Committee meeting held on 1 February 2017. The meeting had an economic development theme.

Committee – 1 February 2017YNYER Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) update

2. We received an update on the work of the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding LEP relating to:
 - 2017 performance against targets
 - Local Growth Fund update
 - EU funding update
 - Collaboration with neighbouring LEPs
 - Brexit and Industrial Strategy.
3. The decision to exit the EU has meant that a number of EU funded business support projects have started later than anticipated. However we were glad to hear that the latest EU funding update confirms that contracts signed right up to the point at which the UK leaves the EU will be honoured.
4. The formal announcement of the LEP's Local Growth Deal 3 bid has now been made. The new funding will deliver amongst other things investment in Scarborough to encourage and incentivise investment in strategic housing development sites; employment and housing growth in Skipton; improvements to Harrogate railway station, helping to open up potential housing and employment opportunities; and support for a new employment site at Pickering to allow the expansion of the high tech engineering sector there.
5. We were informed that the YNYER LEP is working closely with its neighbouring LEPs including joint investment in specific construction investments. An exciting example includes Europe's largest house building factory at Sherburn in Elmet. Collaboration with neighbouring LEPs in our region makes a lot of sense; local authority boundaries are largely an irrelevance to businesses – something that all politicians in our region should take into account!
6. There was a brief discussion at our meeting about the government's intention to develop a national Industrial Strategy; the Green Paper: *Building Our Industrial Strategy* was published last month. Group Spokespersons will be looking at the Green Paper in greater detail when we meet at our mid cycle briefing in March. The document has a strong place element, allowing local areas to identify their needs and push for support for the issues which have greatest impact on their

local economy. A key ask on government that we think the County Council should be making, is around increased job creation in rural areas and the importance of connectivity in delivering this. The government's approach should be about putting rural areas first when it comes to improving connectivity - be it the next generation broadband, mobile phone connectivity or linking areas into major national infrastructure such as HS2. It is after all in rural areas where problems of connectivity exist so the roll-out of new technologies should start there first. We were pleased to note at the meeting that the County Council and the major mobile phone operators have met recently to see how some of the barriers to mobile phone connectivity in the county could be overcome. A concern though is that the rollout of the next generation of mobile data connectivity – 5G- might just be focused on our strategic road networks leading to rural areas being neglected again.

7. Overall we felt that the YNYER LEP has continued to make significant progress this year. It's heartening to see the strong working relationship that exists between local authorities in North Yorkshire and the LEP, which is paying dividends for all by helping to lever in funding for capital projects.

North Yorkshire Director of Public Health Annual Report Update

8. We were provided with a progress update on the report, which as Members will know, for 2016 focused on the working age population and their health and wellbeing. The two strategic priorities for action were to create healthy workplaces and to build a healthy workforce.
9. We supported the initiatives being undertaken - the Wellbeing Charter and the 'Making Every Contact Count' approach. Practical examples include initiatives being undertaken locally with the NHS to encourage people to stop smoking. Such initiatives are being provided to people at the point of need, which we think is right in order to avoid the risk of such initiatives being seen by the wider population as 'nanny state' impositions.

Apprenticeships

10. An update on the County Council's activities on apprenticeships and other employment support initiatives relating to the government's national reforms to apprenticeships was provided at the meeting.
11. We discussed the government's new national arrangements for apprenticeships effective from this April. Apprenticeships will be much more employer led with new standards developed to ensure apprentices have the skills, knowledge and competency for their jobs. Only individuals on an approved statutory apprenticeship scheme will be able to be called an apprentice. This will ensure that apprentices are employed in real jobs and can work towards achieving an agreed standard or framework in a particular profession. All of this is to be welcomed of course but the apprenticeship levy and associated public sector apprenticeship target will pose something of a challenge to the County Council and also to community and voluntary controlled schools where the local authority is the employer.

12. It was good to note the work that the County Council is doing more generally around its targeted workforce and succession planning. Both entry level and higher apprenticeships will help fill gaps in 'hotspot' areas and likely future skills shortages, notably front line adult care. The Council is also working with Higher Education partners including Coventry University in Scarborough on degree level apprenticeships for 'hard to fill' graduate areas such as engineering. Hopefully this initiative along with other initiatives being led by the YNYER LEP's Careers Strategy Group will mean that more young people stay in the county.

County Councillor Andrew Backhouse

Chairman

Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee
County Hall
Northallerton

3 February 2017