

North Yorkshire County Council

18 May 2016

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 13 April 2016.

Committee – 13 April

Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) update

2. The Committee received an update on the work of the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding LEP relating to strategy and funding, infrastructure (including the Local Growth Fund), business support and skills.
3. The LEP is currently refreshing the Strategic Economic Plan and developing a series of action plans. The Local Growth Deal totals £122m supporting 21 capital projects. All of the 2015/16 projects have now received full funding agreements with many now starting on site, although some flagship projects have slipped into future years. The LEP has put in place a number of initiatives to help small and micro businesses grow by providing advice and information, and supporting business networks to pilot new areas. Careers information advice and guidance, in partnership with the County Council, is being piloted to a number of schools in North Yorkshire.
4. We feel that the LEP has achieved significant momentum in the past year. We discussed what plans the LEP is putting in place to respond to future developments (actual or possible) relating to devolution and Brexit. The LEP is keen to ensure that all the local authorities work as one on the offer and asks to government with regards to devolution. EU Structural Investment Funding provides a significant chunk of support to the LEP (110 million euros) and is being invested against the LEP's strategic priorities. The funding committed to date is expected to be unaffected by the results of the EU referendum but there remains business uncertainty in the lead up to the referendum. Outside of these two developments, the poor East-West transport connections remain a brake on economic development.

Local Flood Risk Management Strategy update

5. The Committee was consulted on the draft strategy in October 2014. Since then there have been a number of flooding incidents with Storm Desmond presenting a significant test to the strategy. We were reassured to hear that the strategy has been effective in delivering a flood responsive service to affected communities during this and previous incidents. It helps that the strategy provides key information about the roles and responsibilities of the various parties involved in Flood Risk Management so that the public can see who does what.

Minerals and Waste Plan - Fracking

6. Following on from the Committee's joint meeting with the Scrutiny of Health Committee in January, looking into the impacts of hydraulic fracturing ('fracking'), a draft report was presented to our meeting in April.
7. The Committee agreed with the findings but asked for the recommendations to be made more specific and to re-emphasise the need for the Minerals and Waste Joint Plan to take into account the cumulative impacts of lorry movements on our rural roads if and when an onshore shale gas industry develops in the county.
8. It was also agreed that County Councillor Jim Clark and I would finalise the report for the Executive on 24 May 2016 after taking into account discussions at the committee meeting and comments from the group spokespersons of both committees.

County Councillor Andrew Backhouse Chairman

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

10 May 2016