

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**18 November 2020****THE LEADER, COUNTY COUNCILLOR CARL LES****Covid**

As infection rates rise within the county and especially in areas on our borders, we are faced once again with a lockdown situation. Working alongside our partners we worked well in the first phase of the crisis. I'm confident that we will do so again, armed and strengthened by the experience we gained at that time.

Other colleagues will be picking up on this.

We must communicate with and exhort our communities to do what they can to reduce contacts in this month of lockdown so that we can keep the infection to a minimum. In the Birthday Honours Awards it was good to see 4 of our officers recognised for roles they played in the first lockdown – Rachel Bowes MBE (HAS), Marie-Ann Jackson MBE (Stronger Communities), Denny Levine BEM (HAS) and Nigel Smith BEM (BES). Speaking to each of them afterwards, all said they shared the award with the teams around them.

EU Exit Transition

The County Council is working with local partners to ensure, as far as possible, that our services, the lives of local people and local businesses will not be adversely impacted by the end of the EU Exit Transition period on 31 December 2020.

We are taking steps to ensure that our supply chains are not disrupted, businesses are aware of that they need to be prepared As the uncertainty continues, and that people are aware of the rules about travelling and working in the UK and in Europe. Advice for people and businesses can be found on our website at www.northyorks.gov.uk/brexit.

I want to reassure EU, EEA and Swiss citizens and their families living in North Yorkshire that they are very welcome in North Yorkshire and an important part of the cultural and economic vitality of our county. As valued members of our communities and workforce I would encourage any who have already done so, to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme at www.gov.uk/staying-uk-eu-citizen.

Climate Change

Officers have established a carbon baseline for the Council and developed a pathway tool, which can be used to predict our likely future carbon emissions based on current information. This is helping the council to plan further reductions. The reductions in emissions from the Council's property and fleet during the Covid-19 pandemic can be clearly seen and we are committed to retaining behaviours learnt during the crisis, such as increased use of virtual meetings and home working, where these are appropriate.

A draft carbon reduction plan for the Council is being developed and it is anticipated that the next stage will be the development of more detailed business cases for defined projects. A climate change impact assessment tool has been piloted and rolled out across the Council. The tool aims to raise awareness of climate change impacts, inform the decision making process, encourage mitigation actions and, where possible, capture specific impacts on the carbon footprint of the Council.

The post of Local Authorities Climate Action Co-ordinator has been created within the Local Enterprise Partnership. The post holder took up the position in August and is co-ordinating the development of carbon literacy training across the seven districts and the County Council. Co-ordinated communications campaigns for the public are also being planned.

Greg may wish to add to this summary.

Local Government Reorganisation

I can confirm that our initial submission was made by the due date. I repeat the offer to all Members to consider amendments and additions to the final document before submission in early December.

And finally

Christmas is a special time for all, singles, the lonely, and families, especially children. The December meeting was always a more appropriate time to do this, but can I wish all Members and staff, our Team North Yorkshire, and also all our residents, of whatever age, a peaceful Christmas time, and a Happy but especially a Safe and Healthy New Year.

CARL LES