

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

17 May 2023

STATEMENT OF CLLR CARL LES

Transition

The transition from 8 authorities into 1 has gone very smoothly, largely due to the excellent team work and very detailed preparation by officers from both tiers of local government and all Councils. Where problems have arisen they have been dealt with quickly and successfully. Members hearing of any difficulties should report them to the centre.

We now move on into the next phase of integrating services to start to find the efficiency savings that are so vital to our financial future.

Executive

At a time of great change it is important to maintain some continuity. I have kept the same colleagues in post on the Executive Committee, but before transition I recast some of the roles of the Executive. I communicated the headline roles at the time but today their portfolios are listed in more detail. I want to thank them all for the work they did in the last year of the County Council, and for the work that is to come for North Yorkshire Council.

We will reintroduce informal meetings at least once a year between the Executive and Area Constituency Committee members at locations in the constituencies. These were seen as valuable in the past, and I hope they will be again. We are working on a schedule for the first meetings which will be communicated to all Members.

I have also expressed a wish to hold some Executive Committee meetings in a range of locations across the County, and suitable dates and venues are being sought within our set conditions of public access, access for people with disabilities, and availability of web-streaming facilities.

National Infrastructure Commission

One of our challenges going forward will be the provision of adequate infrastructure to support our ambitions in the Council Plan, a provision either of our own investment, or investment by others. I was pleased to welcome members of the National Infrastructure Commission to NYC recently. Their task is to identify barriers to growth, and importantly opportunities to overcome those barriers. We invited key people from our own operations, together with private sector executives, to discuss topics such as digital connectivity, waste management, electricity grid capacity, energy creation, the circular economy and transport, within an over-arching theme of carbon reduction. They play a senior role in government, reporting directly to the Chancellor, and we have offered to be a rural pilot location.

Devolution

Since the debate in February, and the positive result from our Council and the City of York, we have sent our decision to move forward, along with the response to the public consultation, to Government. It is now for them to consider this and to reach the final conclusion in our desire to introduce devolution of powers to our region, creating a Combined Authority and enabling the election of a Mayor in May 2024. From on-going

discussions with Government we believe this is progressing well and we hope for a positive outcome before the summer Parliamentary recess. Meetings of the devolution joint committee have been on hold whilst the City of York Council election campaigns have been running, and will recommence once the leadership of the new Council is confirmed. In the meantime work is ongoing by officers to evaluate sites and options put forward for the two funds passported to us ahead of the MCA being formed ie, Brownfield Sites and Net Zero initiatives.

CARL LES