

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

19 July 2023

LEADER`S STATEMENT

First 100 days of North Yorkshire Council

It is worth reflecting that North Yorkshire Council has passed its first 100 days of being in existence, the third largest unitary council in the country. The new Council has incorporated all of the services and responsibilities from its eight predecessor councils. Day One of the new Council passed successfully without significant incident and since that time the Council has continued to consolidate and build the infrastructure associated with a new large unitary council. This includes all the democratic institutions of the new Council that we see as important to our roles, but also crucially for the people that we serve so its delivery has been consolidated and is performing well. For example the new Council has already received 200,000 requests for service from members of the public and if I look at just one of the Council's services - waste collection - in the course of the first 100 days, we have collected over 5,600,000 bins with only 129 missed bins in that time. We hope that there will be even fewer missed bins as we move forward as even one missed bin collection is important to that household!

We are moving forward with a range of new strategies to help guide our services over the years ahead. Significantly these include a new Climate Change Strategy for North Yorkshire as well as picking up on important areas such as the economy, housing and tourism.

We are also moving forward with our commitments around an agenda of localism. Pilot schemes for community partnerships have been approved by the Executive. We continue to work closely with town and parish councils. I hope that we will be able to approve shortly a new Parish Charter and that we will announce a range of "double devo" pilot partnerships with Parish Councils agreeing to take on more responsibilities where they are willing and able to do so.

There is of course more to be done and significant restructuring and transformation to take place within this new Council. However, the progress that we have made to date is an achievement and it is right that I use this opportunity to thank all Members for the roles that they have played but also, and very importantly, to thank all of the staff in the new Council who have worked extremely hard to both to keep services running and to bring together all of the elements of the new Council.

Devolution

We continue to work hard to ensure that the Devolution deal between North Yorkshire and York is delivered. We are liaising with the Department of Levelling Up, Homes and Communities around the legislative order that needs to be put in place to create the new Mayoral Combined Authority. Our understanding is that it is progressing. In the meantime we are working closely with our colleagues in the City of York to put in place the necessary arrangements to form the structure and operating model of the new Combined Authority. There is a new political administration in York and I have already had a number of discussions with the political leadership in York which have been both positive and constructive about the opportunities that we can achieve in this shared endeavour.

The Conservative Party should have chosen our candidate for Mayor by the time of this Council meeting, and we await other candidates being chosen by other parties or none, ahead of the election next May.

Single Council

One of the many significant benefits of us becoming a single council, with one voice for North Yorkshire, is the opportunity to grow our county's global brand and to boost the visitor economy here in a sustainable way – playing to our strengths.

I am pleased to say, that we are already seeing the benefits of this coordinated approach - with a significant campaign which has been live since May, paid for by a successful application to the Shared Prosperity Fund.

We all know there's 'No Place Like North Yorkshire' and this is the banner headline for a comprehensive regional and national campaign in London, marketing the broad offer for memorable days out and unforgettable short breaks. In time we will want to increase the dwell time. This campaign is also raising the profile of our diverse offering across history, heritage, coastal destinations, stunning rural landscapes and outstanding market towns alongside our famous Yorkshire welcome.

In addition, we had a high profile at the Great Yorkshire Show which is accepted as one of the best agricultural shows in the country, welcoming circa 140,000 visitors to its four-day event from all over the country, but also and especially from our own county and importantly from West Yorkshire, a key target market. This allowed us to showcase the whole county, alongside its strong local brands.

All this activity allows us to highlight a single vision for the whole county's visitor economy, which is worth £1.5 billion and accounts for 11 per cent of the county's overall economy, employing more than 41,000 people.

Alongside all of this there is a developing Yorkshire-wide collaboration to promote the wider region effectively – no opportunity will be missed.

This is the sector that I have greatest knowledge of because of my former life. Of course this is only one sector of the North Yorkshire economy, however, and our economic strategy will seek to identify and promote sustainable growth across all sectors. Councils don't create wealth per se, but we should strive to be the enablers of it.

COUNCILLOR CARL LES