

Council

23 October 2018

STATEMENT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL/CHAIRMAN OF CORPORATE BOARD

Report of the Leader of the Council/Chairman of the Corporate Board

At an event at the Holiday Inn, Scotch Corner in July we celebrated all the different ways we have delivered Housing in Richmondshire. We heard from the Community Led Housing team, Self Build Alliance, Broadacres Housing Association, Yorvik Homes, Community First Yorkshire, Country Landowners' Association, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA) and our own Local Plan Policy team. All the speakers spoke about how working together we can, and do, delivering affordable housing and housing to rent or buy. We are one of the top councils for delivering against our local plan across the country.

I have attended the YDNPA Management Plan Steering Group meeting in September. Attracting Families, building more houses and an economic project in each district were the items I wanted to see in the Plan. The Plan has now been agreed and will soon be published. This is not just the YDNPA's Plan but one for all in the National Park. We will have to be part of delivery the Plan. We are working with YDNPA in how to deliver affordable houses to buy (discounted sale), the same as we have delivered in Leyburn.

In July I requested that Yorkshire Water attend the following meeting of Local Government North Yorkshire and York, which they did on 5 October when Richard Flint, the Chief Executive, gave a presentation on Yorkshire Water work with customers, flooding, and future environment plans. I wanted the Chief Executive to understand the disruption which Morrison's (the contractors who repair leaks on the highways) have been responsible for. Closing narrow rural roads has meant that farmers with trailers, business, private hire, school transport, and visitors have all suffered with no proper diverted signs or prior warning. After I had made it very clear to the Chief Executive of Yorkshire Water that this disgraceful conduct needed to stop, NYCC also expressed their view that this practice of closing roads without consulting Highways will not be tolerated.

Also on the agenda was an item on no business rates for new Mobile Phone masts. This will help show mobile providers that we are open for business and encourage them to invest in the rural areas, although many urban areas also have poor coverage. At Richmondshire we are trying to encourage more business growth so I will be arranging for a report to come to a future meeting of Corporate Board on whether we should introduce such a policy.

I have attended the Local Enterprise Partnership's Infrastructure and Assets Board in York where a report from the Housing Board outlined what each Authority had delivered against its Local Plan targets. As I stated before, Richmondshire District Council was 158% against target. Unfortunately the YDNPA area had only delivered 31% of its target. Our own Policy Officers are working with the Park to achieve more affordable housing and also working on the 'attracting families' agenda.

At the September meeting we approved the changes to Home Improvement Policy. The Overview and Scrutiny 1 Committee recommended that works costing £5k or less, should not be means tested, which was agreed by the Corporate Board.

I have attended workshops and meetings of the 17 Leaders and Mayor of Sheffield City Region. We are in the process of preparing a submission to Government for the One Yorkshire Devolution deal. As yet, we seem no nearer and this means we are lagging behind other areas who already have a Mayor and delivering their priorities via extra funding.

I will finish on exciting news. We will be hosting the men's junior race for the UCI World Road Cycling Championship in September 2019. The race will have cyclists from across the globe (77 countries were represented this year) giving us once again an opportunity to promote beautiful Richmond and the District. We have shown to the Cycling body that after the success of Tour of Yorkshire in 2018, we at Richmondshire District Council, local businesses and the local community know how to put on a good show.