

Statement by the Cabinet Member for Partnerships

26 July 2011

Economic Development

HDC workspaces (commercial) continue to perform to target.

Managed workspaces at Leeming have improved in the first quarter with 3 additional units agreed for lease.

Evolution and Momentum rentals continue to be challenging with day conference rentals being used to maximise income.

There is renewed interest in our land at Leeming Bar.

Tourism

Thirsk TIP opened on 11 April 2011 and is progressing well with local users, attractions and managers pleased with the new venue and income generation. A formal opening is anticipated on 24 August 2011

Parking

A Christmas Fayre is proposed in Thirsk organised by the Chamber of Trade which will impact on Market Place parking for a weekend, but presents no cost issue in terms of loss of income as we have come to a compensatory agreement with the organisers.

The County Civil Parking Scheme is progressing and NYCC is carrying out its initial consultation to move enforcement away from the police and into authority hands. Information has been put into a Members' Bulletin.

Public Conveniences

In keeping with our policy of community asset transfer we started negotiations with community groups regarding public conveniences. In 2010/11 we managed 9 facilities one of which was as an agent for the National Park. The arrangement for the latter was terminated on 31 March. Discussions have been taking place regarding the transfer of the remaining 8 to the parish or town council. Osmotherley has formally transferred. By the time of this statement it is anticipated that Great Ayton, Stokesley, Swainby and Thirsk will also have transferred.

Bedale initially rejected the transfer but has recently reconsidered and discussions are in hand to agree a transfer.

Easingwold will make a decision at their next Council meeting.

Northallerton have rejected our offer and we will now seek interest from local and national business for the sale of the site

Joint Strategic Forum

A joint Hambleton & Richmondshire Strategic Forum has been established and priorities agreed based on the Sustainable Community Strategy 2011 that was adopted by full Council on 17 May 2011. Work is on-going to wind down the existing LSP structures.

Key priorities are to increase access to Broadband and provide better Winter Weather liaison and provision for the old and vulnerable, via improved community partnership working.

A range of community-led projects are also currently being developed across Hambleton including:

- Cycle links across Bedale
- The Easingwold Outdoor Centre at Dawney Bridge
- Community Litter Picking Initiatives
- Northallerton Town Square
- Stokesley Cycleways
- The Hillside Music Festival

Community Safety Partnership

The merger of the Community Safety Partnerships of Hambleton and Richmondshire has been formally agreed by the Secretary of State as from 1 June 2011.

The Partnership now has a shared team which has resulted in a headcount reduction from 6.2 FTE to 4.2 FTE with the likelihood of a further reduction by September 2012. This has released savings of £28,000 between both Councils. There has been a reduction in funding of £90,000.

CCTV

A report was submitted to informal Cabinet prior to the May elections on options for the service and a further formal report will be submitted by December 2011. Headcount has reduced from 4 to 3. Joint procurement of CCTV maintenance with RDC is being pursued to achieve a saving. Also where possible the contracts relating to CCTV will have a 3 month termination clause, providing flexibility around future delivery structures. New joint maintenance contracts will be in place by October 2011.

Building Control Partnership

The partnership is administered by Ryedale on behalf of Hambleton, Richmondshire, Selby and Scarborough councils and provides building control services that are both statutory and fee earning. Each council funds the partnership with an equal £40k contribution, with a commitment to contribute equally to any additional costs not covered by fee income. This income has reduced considerably in line with the fall off in building activity. Action has been taken to reduce costs, however, 90% of costs are workforce related and the board does not have reserves to meet potential redundancy expenses.

Last year HDC had expected to contribute a further £20k to cover a fee income shortfall in addition to contributions in the preceding 2 years, causing us to give notice of withdrawal from the partnership. This notice was withdrawn after fee income picked up resulting in no extra contribution from the partners.

Ryedale have offered to provide a £100k loan to assist with any potential future redundancy costs and to fund investment in attracting new partners and generating new fee income services.

Withdrawal would cost HDC over £60k and we would need to staff our own service. It would be therefore prudent to study Ryedale's proposal in detail before a referral to cabinet.

Councillor Nigel Clack
Cabinet Member for Partnerships