

STATEMENT BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

13 DECEMBER 2011

It is always rewarding when complete strangers say to you “well done”. That is exactly what the Peer Review Team said about Hambleton District Council and Richmondshire District Council at the end of their 3 day investigation into our Shared Services operation. When such a compliment is made it is usually followed with a “but”. We are not the exception. It was pointed out that Politicians from both Councils are not talking to each other. I have therefore asked Cabinet to contact their opposite number with the aim of working closer for the benefit of all. The Leader of RDC and I already meet and we have been advised to meet more frequently. I have invited the Leader and his Council to attend a Cabinet meeting early in the New Year. All this will help to better understand each others direction of travel.

Capacity was also flagged up. Whereas the financial savings made through reorganisation are commendable and necessary, it was pointed out that constant attention must continue to be given to the possibility of staff overload. This is not just the prerogative of senior staff – it can find its way throughout the organisation. The Chief Executive and I discuss this issue regularly. Congratulations must go to Liz Smith on her new appointment, but it means further reorganisation is necessary. The CE and I are keen to maintain our high level of services, but Members must be understanding should their enquiries take a little longer to be answered. Capacity will continue to be reviewed and Members will be kept informed as we go forward.

The Shared Service Peer Review was timely. We are part of a very small group of Councils across the Country delivering services as we do. More will follow, but in the meantime we plough ahead taking advice wherever it is available. I have written to the Peer Review Team conveying my thanks for their suggestions.

Just one more thing to say.....

*A very Merry Christmas and Successful 2012. Thank you, for
all your contributions during the 2011.*