

Statement by the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Customer Services

9 April 2013

Lunch & Learn

We are continuing to support skill development of local businesses through the popular Lunch & Learn at Evolution. In February our Social Media session was sold out with 32 businesses attending and more on the waiting list. We have 3 further sessions planned to the end of April. Our plans are to look at the potential for roll out in other areas of the district. We have also suggested training on social media skills for members and staff.

Investing in Communities Fund

In support of the Big Society the Council has established an "Investing in Communities Fund" which will see £100,000 in grants available from 1st April 2013. The grants will:

- enable communities to help themselves
- demonstrate local community commitment and involvement
- create active and empowered citizens
- provide the best local solutions to tackle local problems

Changing Lives Building Business

The apprenticeship scheme is continuing to provide working opportunities for 16 to 24 year olds both within the Council and the private sector. We now have 14 apprentices in the Council within a range of services and 7 apprentices in businesses across the district.

Community Safety

The Police and Crime Commissioner for North Yorkshire produced her draft Police & Crime Plan which has been considered by the Community Safety Partnership and Scrutiny and responses have been submitted. The Plan will be published by 31st March and will set out how the Police, Community Safety Partnerships and other partners will work together over the next 4 years. There are six goals set out in the Plan: Reduce harm, Put people first, Deliver more with less, Ensure the police are "fit for the future", Drive justice and Police UK.

CCTV

Work started in February on the upgrade of the CCTV system which should last for about 7 weeks. Preliminary work began in the control room and has now moved onto switching the cameras across the district onto the new system.

Customer Services

Clear priorities are now in place for Customer Services and improvements are being made to focus on meeting our customers' needs. The team has geared up for the increase in face to face and telephone enquiries as a result of the changes to Council Tax and welfare reforms. The 2013/14 Council tax bills issued on 12th March saw 1,000 calls in a single day to the Council (average is 350 calls per day).

Councillor Tim Swales

Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Customer Services