

## STATEMENT BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

**23 July 2013**

Since taking over as Leader, back in May, I have been busy working with Cabinet and Directors on a Strategy to take the Council forward over the next two years.

This will be delivered to Members by September 2013.

I am keen to drive this Council forward to become a more “business friendly” Authority, also to promote Hambleton as a Tourist area.

This took a significant leap forward back in June with the well attended launch of the Business Friendly Seminar in Bedale. Some comments received back were:

- “Fantastic Hambleton Strategic Business Forum conference today at Bedale Hall, came away feeling very inspired”;
- “I very much enjoyed yesterday’s event. The professional organisation of the day was impressive and that comes from someone who holds an event most weeks for between 25-50 businesses around the UK”;
- “Sent out a positive message about Hambleton and its attitude to small local businesses”;
- “Very good format, excellent heartfelt presentations. Very pleased that speakers were inspirational and gave much food for thought”.

### **Apprentices**

Through the Changing Lives Building Business Scheme:

- 15 Apprentices employed in the Council;
- 7 Businesses employing an apprentice – these include apprentices in construction, plumbing, masonry and IT;
- 7 Businesses approved for grants and searching for an apprentice and a suitable training for them to follow;
- 6 month wage subsidy scheme – 2 businesses took up this offer. One of the businesses completed the 6 months and has now offered the employee a permanent position;
- Apprenticeship Support Grant - £11,000 in total has been awarded to businesses that are employing an apprentice through the Changing Lives Building Business Scheme. The grants have been used for further training, specialised kit and IT equipment for the apprentices.

### **Resources**

The Council delivered a £682,000 revenue underspend against the revised budget for 2012/13. It is becoming apparent that as we move away from shared services our revised structures are delivering significant underspends, which is why the Council has decided not to enter into an Service Level Agreement (SLA) for the Revenues and Benefits Service with Richmondshire District Council.

The Council is starting work on the design of the second year scheme for Council Tax discount; this will again require full consultation and a report detailing the scheme will come to Council in due course.

### **Armed Forces Day**

I would like to thank the Members for their support of our "Armed Forces Day" attendance. In particular, to the helpers that made this day happen:

*Jane Hindhaugh and Maureen Young* for their hostess skills.

*Councillor Fortune and Louise Hancock* for the organisation of the visitors and guests, both civilian and military.

The flypast by the Hawk aircraft courtesy of RAF Leeming that arrived as planned and made a spectacular sight.

This is a National day of recognition for all Service Personnel and acknowledges the commitment and bravery of them all and in particular those who have not returned from conflicts old and new in the world and the risks they endure.

It was attended by Navy, Army, Air Force, Fire service, Army cadets and more importantly our veterans, who really appreciate Hambleton District Council's contribution to this event.

**Councillor Mark Robson**  
Leader of the Council