

Leader's Statement – 9 July 2015

I attended the Local Government Conference last week- where Leaders spent most of the time discussing devolution! The general consensus among Leaders is that any bid for a Combined Authority for our district should be based on an area that would include North Yorkshire, Ryedale, Scarborough, Hambleton, Craven, Harrogate, Richmondshire, Selby, East Riding, Hull, York and Leeds city region. You may have heard that Leeds have put in a bid for a combined authority that includes York, Harrogate, Craven and Selby. I understand that under the present rules, the North Yorkshire district councils cannot be split up. I also understand that authorities in a combined authority have to have adjoining boundaries – so that doesn't bode well for the Leeds City Region bid. Officers will work on the "asks" for our bid and then Leaders will bring the detail to their members for support - or not! Further consultation will be undertaken.

Greg Clark was very clear that devolution is what it says on the box - power devolved down from the government – not another tier of local government. He was also very clear about the value of the work that district councils do and that no one should be hoping that devolution means unitaries by the back door.

Just a few snippets from the budget yesterday:

- Compulsory new National Living Wage of £9 an hour by 2020 - starts at £7.20 next April
- Tax free-personal allowance rising to £11,000 in 2016 - higher rate threshold rising to £43,000
- Three million more apprentices with new scheme
- No increase in main rates of income tax, NI or VAT
- Corporation tax rate – will fall by 2% to 18% by 2020