

## **LEADER'S STATEMENT - COUNCIL, 21 FEBRUARY 2017**

At our first Council meeting of 2017 I would like to congratulate those members of the Ryedale community who have been acknowledged for their public work in the New Year Honours. Right Reverend James Jones on receiving a KBE for services to Bereaved Families and Justice, having chaired the Hillsborough Independent Panel and also to Councillor David Cussons on receiving an MBE for services to Agriculture and Rural Communities in North Yorkshire particularly through the Ryedale Agricultural Show.

Moving to our agenda for tonight, Members will be considering the budget for 2017/18 and our financial strategy to 2021. Members of this Council were quite clear about their wishes for the future delivery of services - they wanted to achieve the savings required of this Council without reducing services. Only a far-reaching restructure of the organisation could achieve that. Thanks to the hard work and commitment of all staff of the Council, savings in the region of £1m will be achieved by March 2018, no mean feat in itself, and on top of that there have been no compulsory redundancies. This has been the result of hard work and determination and made possible by Members allowing Officers to do their job. Under the direction of our Chief Executive staff are continuing to work on the redesign of Council services to maintain the range of high quality services delivered for our residents and customers, all within the budget parameters we will set this evening. I have to thank our Chief Executive for her courage and ability in implementing what has been a huge change. We are now a fit for purpose, modern council.

I welcome the Government's announcement that the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding area has been allocated £23.7m from the Local Growth Fund. Ryedale has been successful in attracting funding for a new employment site at Pickering (Thornton Road) to allow the expansion of the high tech engineering sector in Ryedale. This is excellent news for Ryedale and follows our previous success with funding for the Malton Business Park and Food Enterprise Zone. This continues to support the delivery of our priority of investing in better jobs in our area.