

LEADER STATEMENT 8 MARCH 2012

Since the last statement, we have set our budget and frozen council tax for the third year in succession, without touching the new homes bonus which will go entirely to local communities and organizations. And work on the Brambling Fields interchange, the biggest improvement to Ryedale's infrastructure for many years, has begun.

In the next cycle of meetings we can expect to consider the economic strategy action plan further. Work on the implementation of the business hub internal reorganization and on round 3, looking ahead to the 2013/14 financial plan, will continue. We have the use of commuted sums from affordable housing to decide, and there may be more to come relating to the progressive updating of our personnel policies.

Perhaps more importantly, we will need to look at the capital programme again as we move into the summer and autumn. Do we believe that the Environment Agency is going to come up with something both deliverable and worth delivering in respect of Pickering flood defences? Do we see the Milton Rooms as an asset or a liability in the light of the artistic activity now taking place there? And what will the impact of decisions on supermarket applications in Malton have, directly or indirectly, on our programme?

We are only weeks away from a decision on the Livestock Market and Wentworth Street sites. All I will say about them is that whatever the decisions, there will be an afterwards, in which all the protagonists will need to draw a line under the past and try to work together for the future.