

Leader's Statement – 27 June 2019

This chamber looks very different following the elections in May. We've lost long-serving and experienced members, but gained others with new perspectives and new ideas.

We find ourselves yet again in no overall control. But that does not mean no overall vision and direction.

There is lots to do, but I want to focus on four key items we must all urgently take responsibility for:

- We have danced around the future of Ryedale House for too long. I recently toured this building and was shocked by its condition. It is unfit for purpose and quickly deteriorating after decades of neglect. We need to decide what its future will be before time is allowed to take an even greater toll.
- Plans to relocate Malton's livestock market are controversial and costly. There are strong views around this chamber, but we must work to find a way forward. This council has pledged to take a look at the business case around the relocation, and what role we should play. It would be premature to end that work at this critical point and without finding the answers we are seeking.
- The Milton Rooms has fantastic potential as a flagship venue in the heart of Ryedale. It should be seen by this council as an asset rather than a liability. We must continue our support, but with due consideration, of course, to ensuring value for Ryedale taxpayers.
- And finally, but most importantly, we must rebuild the trust of our workforce. Ryedale District Council can achieve nothing without its team of staff. Yet we have let them down over recent years. Now we need to demonstrate our appreciation for their hard work and dedication, and remind ourselves that this council's greatest asset of all is its people.

In order to deliver over the next four years, on these items and others, we need to also look seriously at our own conduct and behaviour. The time for tricks, games, dithering and party political point scoring is over.

I have stated many times, and will state again, that Ryedale requires a "new approach" to doing business. Greater openness and transparency, improved collaboration and goodwill will be vital as we all work together to set policies in the interests of our district.

Finally - I wish every member of this council, in every political group, good luck throughout their term in office.