

LEADER'S STATEMENT 9 JULY

We have now entered a pre-election period – early perhaps but there is a serious prospect of a change of government. Meanwhile the valuable public services provided by this council must be carried on and members and officers alike will need to keep their eye on the ball despite the political excitements.

Our main theme for the rest of the year will be the progress of the LDF. It's worth remembering that what really matters are homes, jobs, skills and the basic infrastructure that makes everything else possible. It is not all about one particular landowner. There may be exciting proposals yet to emerge.

Another important theme will be flooding and drainage. The idea that perfectly good defences, pumping stations and proper maintenance can be abandoned in rural areas is complete nonsense. The idea that every hectare of arable land can be protected to the same standard is not realistic. Can we find a balance acceptable to local communities? This will be a real test of our ability to work with others including the County Council which is being given lead responsibility.

During the next cycle of meetings we will be monitoring our performance against our own plans in a more systematic way than before. And we will face up to the practical implications of funding our share of the Brambling Fields and Vivis Lane improvements.

Finally, we will enjoy the Great Yorkshire, Malton and Ryedale Shows – to name only the largest – which for many people are more important than any Council meeting. And this year we have Yorkshire Day in Malton AND Pickering as well.

Keith Knaggs