

NHDC Labour and Co-operative Group

Leader's Report - September 2019

One hundred days into our Joint Administration, we can report some considerable achievements.

We have:

- Set up a workable joint administration scheme with our partners, with a clear Labour and Co-operative majority, with each party having their portfolio holder as either the Executive Member or a Deputy (these “pairs” have worked together extremely well)
- Led by example by not increasing the cost of Special Responsibilities Allowances
- Declared a Climate Emergency and set up a Cabinet Panel to take forward a programme of work based on engagement with local people and groups
- Reversed a policy of reducing waste and recycling collections for flats, etc. and made progress in tackling the failings of the Waste Contract
- Joined the Co-operative Councils Innovation Network (CCIN) and declared the Council a Co-operative Council
- Signed the Charter against Modern Slavery and taken forward work to identify and bring perpetrators to justice
- Worked with officers to change the culture of the Council and make it more open and welcoming
- Used funding from CCIN to develop our engagement with Young People in the District
- Established a new portfolio of Enterprise and Co-operative Development
- Started a review of Community Engagement and Area Committees in order to make the Council more inclusive and welcoming
- Made progress towards producing a Council Plan that reflects our priorities, giving all members the opportunity to contribute
- Started a Review of the way the Council is governed to make it more member-led and more inclusive
- Taken steps to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy
- Improved the morale of staff and senior management by developing good working relationships

- We have introduced concessions for taxi drivers who use low energy vehicles.

While we have made a good start, there remain many challenges:

- We have no idea yet what the government settlement will be so we are about to enter a challenging series of budget meetings
- It was disappointing that we were not able to introduce bin charge concessions as there was insufficient time to prepare a workable scheme. We will include this in our budget considerations.
- Other areas where we would like to increase our staffing – such as Economic, particularly Co-operative, Development, Scrutiny and Cabinet Panel support – will be difficult to fund unless we find other savings
- The Local Plan put together by the previous administration has been held up by the Government Inspector – a delay which is likely to mean the Plan is not adopted for another year. Failure to have an adopted plan puts the District at risk of rogue developers and also prevents delivery of the numbers of houses we need including affordable and social rented housing.
- Long term collaborative working to do Planning better in future will need to be presented in a positive way (e.g. in response to the Climate Emergency and to enable inclusive Community Wealth Building).
- A no-deal Brexit has the possibility of demanding resources from the Council that we do not have.

25 September 2019