



**Councillor Keith Aspden**  
**Leader, City of York Council**  
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Date: 23 March 2020  
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Dear Ministers

Thank you for your time on recent telephone calls to firstly, discuss devolution for York and North Yorkshire, and secondly, on support for local authorities as we work together with the Covid-19 crisis.

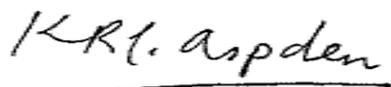
On devolution, it is pleasing that we are now making some headway. City of York Council will continue to support the Government's ambitions for devolution that provide for closer decision-making to a local level, increased investment and recognisable benefits for our residents, communities and businesses. I look forward to working with Simon over the coming months on this agenda.

On the calls, we also discussed our response to Coronavirus. We were encouraged by the reassurance that local authorities will be fully reimbursed by Government for the response efforts, including taking a permissive approach regarding local authorities such as York giving funding to local businesses and organisations in order to adequately respond.

I would be grateful if you would confirm that this covers loss of income and additional demand and not just the fund we will be administering in support of businesses? We also heard from the Secretary of State that the £1.6bn for local authorities was a start and more will be possible. We believe that much more funding will be needed in a short timescale, with funding directly to local authorities and removing restrictions on borrowing for revenue purposes. Immediate pressures for our authority include additional social care and waste staff to cover sickness; increasing need for homecare support; loss of income from car parking, sports centres and registrars; additional ICT equipment; additional cleaning, and continuation of payment to contactors despite service disruption. York's funding as announced is welcome but less than £5m; we estimate costs and loss of income to be well over £20m.

It goes without saying that our teams are doing everything possible, alongside Government officials, to protect our residents and businesses, alongside the voluntary and charitable sectors, using all possible resources at our disposal. The confirmation that this will not impact on the medium and long term financial position of the council would be extremely helpful to allow the right prioritisation to happen in this stage of the response, including consideration of the pressures on children and adult social care budgets.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K.R. Aspden". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

Cllr Keith Aspden  
Leader of the Council