

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

19 DECEMBER 2007

STATEMENT OF THE BUSINESS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER COUNTY COUNCILLOR JOHN FORT

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

A19 Safety and Congestion Study

Members of the Selby Area Committee will be aware that a major study into traffic safety and congestion on the rural sections of the A19 between York and the County Boundary south of the M62 was recently completed.

Staff from BES, Jacobs and Selby District Council, working closely with local Members and Parish Councils, identified safety and congestion issues on this section of the A19.

The results of the Study were reported to the Selby Area Committee on 19 November 2007. The initiatives identified in the report included £467k of schemes to address accident problems and delays at a number of key junctions onto the A19. These schemes have now been added to the reserve list of schemes for funding over the next few years from the Integrated Transport Capital Allocation or where appropriate from developer contributions.

95 Alive – York & North Yorkshire Road Safety Partnership Drink Drive Campaign Christmas 2007

Members will be familiar with our involvement in the 95 Alive Road Safety Partnership that aims to save an additional 95 lives by the end of 2010. The Partnership launched its largest campaign to date at Thirsk Racecourse on 29 November 2007.

This campaign includes:-

- A comprehensive programme of specially made radio advertisements, television and newspaper articles
- The distribution of posters and drink mats warning of the penalties and dangers of drink driving. These will be delivered to every licensed premises by Fire & Rescue Service staff
- Attendance by Road Safety Officers, Community Safety Officer and the Police with an information trailer at numerous pre-Christmas events.

The launch event was well attended by a number of radio stations, all the main local newspapers and by Tyne Tees Television – whose presenter, Clare Montgomery, took the role of the “injured driver” in a simulated road crash and rescue staged by the emergency services. Clare was transferred to the Great North Air Ambulance and the event was covered on the main evening TV news that night. The comprehensive radio and press coverage

will hopefully have got this important message across the County and parts of the wider region and will be effective in reducing the number of people who are injured and killed by drink drivers.

Shaken Bridge, Hawnby

Members will recall that in June 2005 flash floods on the western edge of the North York Moors washed away many roads and bridges. These floods left the village of Hawnby, near Helmsley, cut off from the main road after the collapse of the 280 year old stone arch Shaken Bridge.

Within a few weeks of the collapse the County Council had provided a temporary Bailey bridge to maintain access for the villagers and by June 2006 had designed a replacement stone arch bridge and started work on its construction.

The replacement bridge, which cost approximately £1.3m, was finished in May 2007 and I was able to officially open it two years to the day after it was washed away.

I am happy today to be able to report that the County Council and our partners on this project, Mouchel, Jacobs and Balfour Beatty, have won an award for the bridge at the Institution of Civil Engineers annual Historic Bridges and Infrastructure Ceremony. The judges' comments were that it was:-

“A back to basics projects; well engineered using traditional and modern techniques. Terrific craftsmanship.”

National TravelWise Awards – Thirsk WalkWise

Members will recall that North Yorkshire County Council worked with Thirsk Town Council and local schools and groups to develop the Thirsk WalkWise scheme. This scheme forms part of our Local Transport Plan work to reduce car use for short journeys and to encourage physical activity amongst children and their families. Our research highlighted that 'time' is one of the things that puts people off choosing to walk even for short journeys. The Thirsk WalkWise project applies a 5, 10 and 15 minute walking zone around the whole town with painted pavement signs so that people can gauge accurately how little time a journey will actually take to walk and this has encouraged them to do so.

This successful scheme has now been judged in the National TravelWise Excellence Awards to be the:-

“Most Innovative TravelWise Project by an Individual or Public Sector Organisation.”

This is the second year running that our Travel Awareness team have gained recognition of their work at this level and I would congratulate them.

DEVELOPMENT & COUNTRYSIDE SERVICES

Minerals & Waste Planning

Regional Spatial Strategy

At previous meetings of the County Council Members have been advised of the Regional Assembly's progress in preparing the Regional Spatial Strategy and its submission to the Government.

In September the Secretary of State published proposed changes to the draft RSS, following the publication of the report on the Examination in Public. These are currently the subject of consultation.

The Secretary of State has supported the overall strategy in RSS. She has recognised that the focus for economic and housing growth should be on West Yorkshire and that there is a need for continuing restraint on housing growth in rural areas, such as North Yorkshire, linked to a greater emphasis on meeting local needs.

The County Council's response to the Proposed Changes was agreed by the Executive at its meeting on 4 December.

We continue to work closely with the District Councils, the National Parks and the City of York to maintain a joint approach to the proposals in RSS, particularly as they affect North Yorkshire.

County Councillor John Fort
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