

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

21 MAY 2008

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

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

Bedale – Aiskew – Leeming Bar Bypass

The Yorkshire and Humber Regional Transport Board has in April carried out an interim review of its Regional Funding Allocation programme in order to address a potential underspend by introducing more schemes into the programme that can be delivered by 2013/14.

We had indicated to the Board that the Bedale – Aiskew – Leeming Bar Bypass could satisfy the review criteria providing that a decision was reached by the Department for Transport (DfT) to progress the A1 upgrade scheme from Dishforth to Barton. Members will be aware that the DfT announced at the end of March that the A1 scheme will go ahead in two phases. At its meeting in early April the Regional Transport Board endorsed the Bedale – Aiskew - Leeming Bar Bypass as a priority for funding by the Department for Transport. The very short timescale between the DfT announcement and the RTB meeting prevented a prior report being put to Members. Consequently a report will be taken to the 27 May meeting of the Executive who will be asked to make a decision on whether to support the preparation of a formal business case for submission to the Department for Transport for funding for the bypass scheme.

Cayton Bay Landslip

There has been considerable media coverage in recent weeks of a coastal landslip at Cayton Bay near Scarborough. The landslip has occurred on land owned by the National Trust and has affected several properties on the Knipe Point housing estate.

The National Trust has commissioned a firm of consultants, Halcrow, to investigate the cause of the landslip. Initial indications suggest a link with groundwater, however, investigations are ongoing and Halcrow is looking to report their findings at the end of May 2008. In addition, Halcrow has indicated that the land potentially at risk from any future failure could locally extend to the centre of the A165 Filey Road.

At present there are no indications of the current landslip having affected the A165 Filey Road. However, as a precaution daily inspections of the road are being carried out and traffic management plans have been prepared just in case it becomes necessary to close the road.

The long-term solution lies with the diversion of the A165 which forms a major part of the Scarborough Integrated Transport Scheme. Construction works started in October 2006 and are programmed for completion in Autumn 2008. Completing of this project will take A165 traffic away from the section of road close to the landslip.

DEVELOPMENT & COUNTRYSIDE SERVICES

Historic Environment Day

In February I had the pleasure of launching the County Council's second annual Historic Environment Day. Over 300 people packed into Hambleton Forum at Northallerton to hear about the latest events uncovering the history of the County.

Historic Environment Day is organised by the Historic Environment Team within the Countryside Service. It features speakers from all over the County, and this year also an introduction to the varied work of the County Council's own in-house team, the audience then saw extraordinary photos of the diseased bones of Saxon skeletons dug up at Spofforth near Harrogate, learnt about early mining on Greenhow Hill and found out a whole new slant on the medieval view of castles in their landscapes.

For many in the crowded auditorium the most exciting talk was by Dr Gareth Williams from the British Museum. He showed superb photos of the hundreds of beautiful silver objects found in the so-called Harrogate hoard – whose location remains highly secret to protect the land from illegal digging. This Viking hoard of over 617 coins dating to the reign of Athelstan in the ninth century was found in a decorated silver bowl by a father and son who were out with their metal detectors in 2007.

The event proved to be a huge success and prompted much positive feedback. For this reason, it has now been decided to make Historic Environment Day an annual event and advance planning has already begun for 2009.

County Councillor John Fort
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