

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

18 FEBRUARY 2009

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

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

Bedale – Aiskew – Leeming Bar Bypass

Members will recall last time I reported that officials from the Department for Transport (DfT) has visited North Yorkshire in October 2008 to discuss the Bedale – Aiskew – Leeming Bar Bypass scheme with the project team. I also reported that the Major Schemes Business Case (MSBC) was almost completed and was to be submitted to the DfT in December 2008.

I am pleased to say that the MSBC was submitted on time and the DfT has subsequently confirmed that we have provided them with a 'compliant' document. This means that the DfT are satisfied that we have provided all information they need for them to take approximately 6 months to complete and the project team will be working closely with the DfT official during this period of time.

Regional Funding Allocations 2 (RFA2)

At the meeting of the Executive on 14 October 2008, Members agreed that the County Council should submit a bid to the Regional Transport Board for £50m of funding for the Malton and Norton Transportation Package and £75m of funding for the Harrogate and Knaresborough Transport Package, from the Regional Funding Allocations (RFA).

As expected, the Bids from all the authorities across the region were far in excess of the Regional Funding Allocation.

The Regional Transport Board (RTB) considered the bids at their meeting on 23 January 2009. Unfortunately the Board did not agree to endorse either of the Packages for recommendation to the Department of Transport for funding. I am disappointed at this and we will continue to look for opportunities for the transport issues in these areas.

However the Board approved proposals to manage the early years under spend on the RFA major schemes programme. A key element of these proposals was that local transport authorities (including NYCC) should receive a 20% uplift to their Local Transport Plan (LTP) capital block for the years 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12 from the RFA allocation. Subject to final Department for Transport confirmation this should mean additional funding of £18.625m spread over the 3 years. The RTB expressed a strong view that since the RFA major schemes allocation is a transport allocation they would expect that it should be used by authorities to provide transport improvements. In response to the views of the RTB, Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber (GOYH) are to meet the transport authorities and discuss how they intend to utilise the uplift and the possible stretching of LTP targets to reflect the extra finance available. There will inevitably be an expectation by the GOYH that the uplift will be used to improve transport which will be demonstrated through outcomes in delivery of targets.

Provisional Road Casualty Statistics 2008

The provisional road casualty statistics for North Yorkshire for 2008 show that the number of deaths and serious injuries has reduced from 715 in 2007 to 529 in 2008, a reduction of 26.6%. The figures for 2008, which are subject to final confirmation with North Yorkshire Police, represent a 49.4% reduction compared with the 1994-98 baseline average and exceed our target for 2010 contained in the Local Transport Plan. The number of road deaths has also reduced from 81 in 2007 to 54 in 2008, a reduction of 33.3%. This represents further progress towards the '95 Alive' road safety target to save 95 lives that would otherwise have been lost to road death by the end of 2010.

The provisional figures for the end of 2008 are very positive but it must be remembered that we will only continue to make further progress through the hard work and continued effort of the County Council, all other partners that make up the users of North Yorkshire themselves. Campaigns such as Operation Anvil and the Summer Drink Drive can only be delivered in partnership with others and the County Council places a high priority on road safety and the work it does through '95 Alive' and will continue to do so.

Whitby Park and Ride

The Integrated Transport Capital Programme contains a proposal to provide a Park and Ride scheme for the town of Whitby. The need for a Park and Ride service to help ease congestion in the centre of Whitby was identified in the Whitby Traffic Management Strategy. A number of potential sites on the outskirts of Whitby were considered for a Park and Ride facility and this culminated in the selection for a site on land to the west of the town accessed directly from the A171 Guisborough Road on the edge of the North Yorkshire Moors National Park.

Members may recall that a planning application for the Whitby Park and Ride site was refused planning permission by the North Yorkshire Moors National Park in early 2008. Since then officers have been working closely with colleagues from the National Park to address the issues that were preventing the approval of the site. I am pleased to say that following changes to the detailed proposals, including a revised landscaping scheme and the removal of street lighting, the National Park awarded the Whitby Park and Ride site planning permissions on 22 January 2009. Work has now begun on the detailed design for the scheme.

DEVELOPMENT AND COUNTRYSIDE SERVICES

Historic Environment Day

I am please to advise Members that the County Council's Annual Historic Environment Day is taking place next Saturday, 21st February at Hambleton Forum, Northallerton. During the day, eight talks will take place. This is normally a very successful day promoting the County's rich heritage. I am sure that this year's event will be no less successful.

JOHN FORT