

## NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

12 OCTOBER 2011

### STATEMENT OF THE HIGHWAYS AND PLANNING SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER COUNTY COUNCILLOR GARETH DADD

#### HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

##### **HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT (HMC 2012)**

As Members will already be aware, on 27 September 2011 the Executive approved the recommendation that the contract for HMC 2012 (including street lighting) be awarded to Ringway.

The mobilisation process is now underway in order to ensure that all of the necessary resources and management systems are in place to meet the contract start date of 1 April 2012. I would like to remind Members that a briefing on the new contract will be given at the Members Seminar on 19 October 2011.

In the meantime work continues to be delivered 'on the ground' under the current contract.

##### **WINTER**

I would like to remind Members that we officially started this year's winter maintenance service on 3 October 2011. We have made the usual preparations which has included making sure we have all our salt barns full to maximise our salt stocks for the start of the winter. We hold 55,000T of salt and have access to further supplies throughout the winter season from Cleveland Potash. Members will also recall that the majority of our salt is now stored under cover which keeps it dry and means that less will need to be used during icy conditions.

As I detailed at our last meeting, we have now launched our community engagement scheme. So far twenty Parish Councils have expressed an interest in being involved and our local Area Offices are looking to take the scheme forward in those areas over the coming weeks. If Members are aware of any communities is interested in being involved can I ask that they contact the local Area Offices as soon as possible. Last year we received widespread praise for the information we were able to provide to the public via our website. This was found to be particularly useful during the period of extreme weather and this year we have reviewed the website to make sure that the salient information is readily available, including details of gritting routes and the very latest weather forecasts as well as cameras at a number of sites.

##### **IRTON TREE**

Members will no doubt be aware of the issue regarding the felling of the beech tree on Main Street in Irtton near Scarborough. At the time of writing this statement the tree has not yet been felled but I'd like to take the opportunity to advise members that the situation has arisen as a result of the County Council not felling the tree and consequently being taken to court by a member of the public for not doing so. The County Council has been unable to fell the tree as a result of the existence of a tree preservation order placed on it by Scarborough Borough Council.

On 19 August a judge ordered that the County Council must fell the tree by 30 September 2011 and since then we have made a concerted effort to carry out the requirements of the court order but this has been prevented by the actions of people protesting in and around the tree. As you know, the County Council has legal and statutory obligations over which it has no discretion, and as the highway authority it must act according to the law.

I am very concerned at the costs of this whole process and can advise members that I have requested that an investigation is carried out into this matter to see what lessons can be learned and how we can reduce the likelihood of a similar occurrence happening again. I will ensure that the results of the investigation are reported to the Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

This is the position at the time of writing. The situation may well have progressed since submission of this statement.

GARETH DADD