

North Yorkshire County Council

18 July 2012

**Statement of Highways and Planning Services Portfolio Holder
County Council Gareth Dadd****£2M Pot Hole Funding**

Members will be aware that the Executive recently approved an additional £2m of funding to be spent on pot hole repairs as part of the County Council's response to the current economic climate and the need to help stimulate growth. The funding is to be spent by the County Council's new highway maintenance contractor, Ringway, on carriageway and footway repairs using their own local labour force wherever possible and, in addition, the contractor will also take on two new apprentices. As the money has not come through our normal highways maintenance funding arrangements it is not necessary to follow our normal prioritisation mechanisms. Each local member has been allocated approximately £25k to spend in their own area and is being consulted on what they would like to see it spent on.

Local Sustainable Transport Fund Bids

On 27 June the Government announced the final round of successful LSTF bids. I am very pleased to say that we were offered partial funding for both our bids. We have been offered £1.653m for our Harrogate package and £3.661m for the Whitby package.

Whilst not the full amount we bid for, this £5.3m of investment for transport in the county should allow us to reduce congestion and improve bus services, cycle routes and pedestrian facilities in Harrogate town centre. In Whitby we should now be able to deliver the long awaited Whitby Park and Ride including all the necessary changes to car parking to support the service. As you will recall, the bid was a joint bid with the North York Moors National Park and this funding should also allow us to provide the 'Hopper' bus service from the Park and Ride into the Esk Valley and some targeted improvements to Rights of Way which will allow people to walk between the Hopper bus stops and the Esk Valley Railway stations.

Area Management Changes

As you know, as part of the One Council approach to Management and Supervision we are required to challenge staff structures to ensure that they have the right number of managers compared to front line staff. With this in mind a review of the management arrangements for the local area highways offices has recently been carried out.

As a result of the review, we are in the process of reducing the number of local Area Highways Managers from 7 to 4 during the course of this financial year. This change increases the geographical area covered by three of the four remaining area managers and introduces the concept of shared area managers responsible for two local area offices. I am confident that the new arrangements will help us to continue to deliver efficient and effective highway services whilst making a significant contribution to the One Council savings programme.

Implementation of the new management structure has now started following the retirement of Chris Craven, Skipton Area Manager and Paul Sheppard, Selby Area Manager at the end of last month. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank Chris and Paul, on behalf of the County Council, for all the work they have done over the years and to wish them all the very best in their retirement.

Olympic Torch and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee

I am delighted to say that the celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the passage of the Olympic Torch relay through North Yorkshire were both a resounding success. The County Council helped over 50 local communities to enjoy street parties celebrating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee through our flexible approach to organising a temporary road closure. In addition, officers worked extremely hard with the police, district councils and other partners to ensure that the arrangements for the Olympic Torch relay went smoothly and that everyone was able to enjoy what was a 'once in a lifetime' experience. I would like to pass on my sincere thanks to all involved for their efforts in ensuring that these two huge events were celebrated in style in North Yorkshire.

Duty to Co-operate

The Localism Act has introduced a new legal "Duty to Co-operate" in the preparation of strategic planning policies. The Duty is seen by Government as a means of ensuring co-ordination between plans and strategies in the absence of Regional Spatial Strategies, which the Government has announced it intends to revoke. The new Duty will be relevant to our work on the preparation of a Minerals and Waste Development Framework, which is currently in progress. It will also be relevant to wider strategic planning work the Council is involved in, such as supporting the District and Borough Council's in their local planning work, and is likely to lead to more requests from partners for the provision of such support.

Addressing the requirements of the new Duty will be important in ensuring the successful adoption of new planning policies in the Minerals and Waste Development Framework, not least because minerals and waste planning matters both give rise to important issues and challenges which extend beyond administrative boundaries. In order to ensure that the project plan for the Minerals and Waste Development Framework reflects likely requirements arising from the new Duty, a review has been commenced.

Breach of Planning Contravention Notice results in Fine

On 15 May, one of North Yorkshire's landfill operators, York Recycling Limited, pleaded guilty in Northallerton Magistrates' Court and was sentenced to a fine of £500 and ordered to pay county council costs of £2,800. The company admitted to having failed to comply with the terms of a Planning Contravention Notice served on them by the county council in January of 2011. The county council found itself in a position of having no choice but to serve the notice when previous attempts to obtain information from the company had not received a response.

This conviction should send a clear message to those operators in the county involved in all waste management activities that the county council will not tolerate a consistent and persistent lack of regard to the authority on planning matters. This case demonstrates our determination to ensure that companies comply with their obligations under the terms of the planning consents from which they benefit.

GARETH DADD