

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

21st May 2014

STATEMENT OF THE LEADER COUNTY COUNCILLOR JOHN WEIGHELL

40th Anniversary

On the 1st April NYCC was 40 years old, having started life on 1st April 1974. North Yorkshire was made up of all but the most northerly parts of the North Riding, a substantial part of West Riding, the City of York and a small part of East Riding. Looking at the list of members puts sharply into focus the changing face of members. There were 93 in total; only 10% were women; 6 had titles and 7 had held senior military ranks in the army. The process of administration was carried out by hand or by typewriter and only complex calculations were carried out by comptometers or mechanical calculators. Looking back over the 40 years makes me realise the enormous strides Local Government has made, largely through the use of technology and makes me wonder what Local Government will be like over the next 40 years.

Tour de France

Preparations for the Tour de France continue at a pace. By the time of this Council meeting there will only be 45 days to go to the Grand Depart. 127 miles of the race are run through North Yorkshire over the first two days (5th and 6th July). This is by far the largest part of the race within any council area. The down side to this is that there will be a considerable amount of disruption to “normal life” in the western part of the county but this is offset by having one of the largest sporting events in the world in our county and an unparalleled opportunity to showcase the beauty of North Yorkshire to the world. The council is working hard to communicate with residents and businesses about the disruption and to inform visitors of the need to properly plan how they will see the race and make the most of this once in a lifetime opportunity.

Local Enterprise Partnership

The Local Enterprise partnership has submitted its bid into government for a share of a £2 billion Local Growth Fund to be spent in 2015/16. Our strong bid asks for £62m and will invest in some key developments across the region. These include Olympia Park in Selby, North Northallerton and Middle Deepdale in Scarborough. Of particular interest to the county are proposals to attract investment in increasing highways maintenance and a long term plan to improve east-west connections ranging from A64 in the east to Kex Gill in the West. The plan, in total, has the aspiration to deliver 20,000 jobs and double house building. In addition to this the LEP is finalising the allocation of £9m worth of funding from

its Growing Places Fund. Investments have included Whitby Business Park, North Yorkshire Moors Railway and the Food and Environment Research Agency in Sandhutton.

Highways Funding

The condition of the highway network is the number one transport issue facing the County Council and, in recognition of this, we place a very high priority on the delivery of highway maintenance works. Members will be aware that the Executive recently earmarked £5m worth of additional highway maintenance funding pending discussions with government about potential match funding. I wrote to the Secretary of State for Transport, Patrick McLoughlin on 13 February 2014 highlighting the importance of good highway maintenance and the problem of the deterioration in highway condition of our minor roads. I subsequently met him on 27th February and raised the importance of this issue to North Yorkshire. In his reply to my letter the Secretary of State emphasised the additional funding that the Government was making available for highway maintenance across the country and highlighted the need to work with our Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) in respect of additional funding for highway maintenance through the Local Growth Fund. I am pleased to say that this engagement was already well advanced and that the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding LEP Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) that was recently submitted to the Government contains a bid for extra funding from the Local Growth Fund for highway maintenance on our minor routes emphasising the importance of good highway maintenance to our local economy. The County Council has already been awarded approximately £3.2m additional highway maintenance funding from the Government's Severe Weather Recovery Scheme and is developing a bid for funding from the recently announced £168m Pothole Fund.

Barry Khan

On behalf of the County Council I am delighted to welcome Barry Khan to his first meeting of the County Council. Barry joins up from Stockport, where he has held a similar role and I very much look forward to working with him in his role as Assistant Chief Executive with responsibility for Legal and Democratic Services and of course as Monitoring Officer.

JOHN WEIGHELL
Leader of the Council