

## NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

23<sup>rd</sup> July 2014

### STATEMENT OF THE LEADER COUNTY COUNCILLOR JOHN WEIGHHELL

#### **Tour de France**

Just over two weeks ago the Tour de France visited Yorkshire and captured the attention of millions.

At the heart of this was North Yorkshire which played host to 51% of the overall Yorkshire Stages 1 and 2. There have been differing estimates from 2 million to 4 million in terms of the spectators who watched the event but the truth is that the crowds were vast.

Each of our market towns on the route from Skipton to Hawes, to Leyburn and culminating in Harrogate itself, had massive crowds. In between almost the entirety of the route was lined with spectators. Some of the most iconic scenes of the whole Grand Depart took place in the beautiful countryside of North Yorkshire, such as Buttertubs and Grinton Moor where the images of blue sky, beautiful scenery, huge crowds and battling riders caught our imagination.

After some worrying overnight and early morning rain, the sun came out, the skies were a vivid blue and the magnificent scenery, heritage buildings, villages and towns of North Yorkshire were seen by a huge worldwide audience with many commenting on the unrealised beauty of it all.

In amongst all of this Stage 1 and Stage 2 both had fantastic cycle races. The highest drama was reserved for Harrogate with Marcel Kittel winning a thrilling sprint finish that contained the drama of a crash and the very disappointing injury to Mark Cavendish.

The benefits that will have resulted from the Tour de France are many. The immediate boost to the economy that so many visitors will have brought, the enormous profile gained for the county that will help deliver tourists for years to come, the enthusiastic way in which communities came together to celebrate and to enjoy the Tour, the boost to cycling and physical activity across the county and the engagement of young people whose imagination will be captured by the event.

North Yorkshire County Council has played a significant role in leading on delivering this event alongside Leeds City Council, Welcome to Yorkshire and many other partners. I would like to pay particular tribute to Gary Verity and his Welcome to Yorkshire Team for winning the Grand Depart for Yorkshire and to the Amore Sports Organisation who run the actual race and who were great partners to work with. However, I would most of all like to thank those within North Yorkshire who made our part of the event such a success. This clearly includes all of the parish councils, community organisers and other individuals who helped the communities of North Yorkshire engage in the event so enthusiastically. I would like to thank the many

tour-makers who came from North Yorkshire to volunteer and to help the event take place. I would in particular like to thank the many staff from across the county, some of whom have worked on this project for over a year. Their organisation, professionalism and commitment to the event were enormous and were crucial to its success. I would also like to thank the many other partners who worked with the County Council, our district colleagues, the police, the ambulance service, North Yorkshire Dales National Park and many others who combined together as a hugely effective team.

## **Highways Maintenance**

I have previously reported to Council in my Leader's statement efforts that we, as a county council have been making, to achieve a higher level of investment into our road network. Colleagues will be aware of letters that I have sent to the Secretary of State and indeed a meeting that I had with Patrick McLoughlin to argue the case for more Government funding, particularly for the b-route network and more minor routes which are so prevalent in the county. Two weeks ago the Government announced the growth deals for the different areas across the country and I am extremely pleased to report that we have secured additional funding for highways maintenance amounting to almost £24m spread up until the financial year 2020/2021. This comes on top of the £5m the Government announced for the County Council early in the year and, of course, the £5m that we as a County Council said we would match that funding with.

The condition of the roads across North Yorkshire is a major priority. It is an achievement by this council to have secured this extra funding from Government. We are continuing to manage our financial position well, our 2013/14 outturn position demonstrated that we have been able to make further early savings and accordingly I will be looking again at what additional funding we, as a County Council, can put into this priority area.

## **LEP Growth Deal**

The additional funding for highways maintenance came as part of a wider package of investment into North Yorkshire, York and East Riding that was achieved by our Local Enterprise Partnership. The total funding amounts to £110m over 5 years from 2015. The LEP has the ambition to deliver an additional 4,000 jobs and to help partners deliver 5,000 new homes with this funding. Some of the highlights from the growth package that has been announced include major employment and housing developments at Catterick Garrison, Northallerton, Selby and in Scarborough.

JOHN WEIGHELL  
Leader of the Council