

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

23 JULY 2014

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

Highways and Transportation

HMC 2012 Evaluation Panel – Outcome May 2014

Members will be aware of the outcome of May's HMC 2012 Evaluation Panel with Ringway (the County Council's Highways Maintenance Contractor).

Following a detailed assessment of Ringway's performance for 2013/14, the Contract Period has been reduced by one year, so that the contract currently expires on 31 March 2021. In addition, performance targets have been agreed for the next three years. The 'lost' year can subsequently be won back for future good performance.

At the time of writing, Ringway was due to attend the Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 July 2014 to discuss their 2013/14 performance.

Whitby Park and Ride Service

At the time of writing this statement we remain on track to have the Whitby Park and Ride site fully open and complete for the start of the school summer holiday apart from some planting and landscaping which is best done in Autumn. As I informed you at the last meeting the service started as scheduled in time for the Easter holidays on Good Friday, 18 April.

Although the Park and Ride site was not quite fully finished use of the park and ride service at this early stage is probably slightly better than we expected with over 600 people using it on the first day.

It is proving very popular with many local groups as well and we have received a number of requests for extended hours of operation. We are looking at how we can accommodate these at no extra cost to the Council and plan to run a one off trial of longer opening hours for the Whitby Regatta weekend in August.

I would like to thank the officers and local Members involved in delivering the park and ride scheme and I am pleased that despite all the challenges we have had delivering the project it is already proving to be very popular with users and many locals.

Tour de France

In my last statement, I provided members with an update on our planning for the Tour de France which was by then well advanced. I am now delighted to say that the delivery of the Tour de France has been a huge success for North Yorkshire and, in my view, it represents an excellent example of team work across a wide range of public sector organisations. I would however, like to pass on a very big thank you to all of our highways staff for their hard work and dedication in helping plan, prepare and deliver a fantastic event.

They, along with District Council Officers, really did go the extra mile!

Additional funding for Highway Maintenance

In my last statement, I set out details of two bids we had made for additional highway maintenance funding in recognition of the vital role that good highway maintenance plays in delivering local economic growth.

As mentioned by the Leader, on 7 July the Government announced the outcome of their deliberations on the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) and it was very pleasing to see that the recommendation from the North Yorkshire Local Transport Body (NYLTB) for additional highway maintenance funding had been accepted and provisionally awarded the full bid amount of £24m which is to be spent across the five year period from 2016/17 to 2020/21. The money will be spent on our minor routes which provide vital access for business across the county.

It was not an easy “win” with many outside the organisation casting doubt on the strength of the bid. I, with the core team, persevered amid the “challenge” and the result is plain to see.

The second bid was one from the Government’s “Pothole Fund” from which we were awarded £5.176m. This reflects well on the Asset Management team whom “maxed out” our potential. Had it been distributed in the usual formula manner, we would have been awarded approx £4.8m. Again, I must praise the skills of the unsung heroes within County Hall.

As we now progress the funding available, and works programmes, you may know that we now have a rolling 2 year Capital Plan in order to help planning and schedules for our contractor. Once we have more detail of the exact funding available I am asking for a detailed Members briefing to be circulated. This shall be produced over the next month or so.

Grass Cutting

Over the next few weeks, we shall be finalising the maps of where we shall continue to cut. This will form the basis of communication with Parish, Town and District Councils.

I can give every assurance that cutting for safety reasons shall continue, either by ourselves or on our behalf via the interested Councils. We shall be working closely with all involved to assist, where we can, those Councils that wish to see amenity grass cut. They shall have various options and again we shall be as helpful as we can in terms of volunteers and contractor identification and approval.

My personal view is very clear. To cut amenity grass is a decision that should be taken locally. It is also part of a financial saving package approved by Full Council in February.

Planning Services

York Potash

Members of the North York Moors National Park Authority’s Planning Committee received an Officer Report on 20 March which provided an update on the position with regard to the York Potash proposals. The report explained that York Potash has unexpectedly announced a significant change to the project at a briefing meeting held in Leeds on 25 February. There exists a new proposal for an underground conveyor belt system to be contained in a 6 metre diameter tunnel, approximately 37.5 kilometre long, which will be constructed at a general depth of between 120-360 metres below the National Park before emerging via a surface drift portal at Wilton on Teesside. This negates the need for the burying of a 44.5 kilometre pipeline and any associated disturbance that could have potentially arisen.

The report further explains that a decision has been taken by York Potash not to extend the mineral extraction area to cover small additional areas of land outside the National Park at the 'Whitby Enclave' and in the vicinity of 'Cloughton Sands' at this stage. As a consequence, the County Council will not now be involved as a joint determining planning authority. A new application is still anticipated to be submitted, but due to the aforementioned changes, this submission is expected to be made solely to the National Park Authority rather than to both the Park Authority and the County Council.

GARETH DADD