

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL****20 May 2015****STATEMENT OF THE LEADER  
COUNTY COUNCILLOR JOHN WEIGHELL****Tour of Yorkshire**

The Tour of Yorkshire took place on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> May. This was the legacy event staged following the successful Grand Départ of the Tour de France in the County. Once again large numbers of people came out to see a tremendous race which featured a significant part of North Yorkshire. The first day started in Bridlington but then spent much of the day touring through Dalby Forest, the North Yorkshire Moors before hitting the coast at Whitby and descending down the coastline for a finish in Scarborough. It is estimated that a quarter of million people watched this first day which was fantastic given that it was a normal working week day. Day 2 once again started with large crowds in Selby in front of the impressive Selby Abbey before moving off to East Yorkshire and into York having passed through southern parts of Ryedale on route. Day 3 was mostly spent in West Yorkshire with only a short stretch coming through the South of Craven before culminating in a finish at Roundhay Park in Leeds. The County Council was one of a group of partners involved in the successful staging of the event.

**Welcome to Yorkshire**

The County Council is one of a number of councils currently working with Welcome to Yorkshire to look at the financial sustainability of the organisation moving forward. Clearly, Welcome to Yorkshire incurred large expenses following the Tour de France and needs continued support from partners to be sustainable in the years to come. Considerable investment has been made in the brand Welcome to Yorkshire and the profile of Yorkshire has increased enormously over the last few years. The county has a brand recognition that many areas are envious of. It is extremely important to maintain this profile and to generate business from tourism and also from entrepreneurs who see the county as a vibrant and successful place to be based.

**2020 North Yorkshire**

At the time of writing we have had the general election result and the ministerial posts are being allocated. There remains a major financial challenge for the country and it is clear that public service austerity will continue for some years yet.

The Council has already been on a hard journey over recent years to make significant savings from our budgets. Over the last 4 years we have delivered £94 million worth of savings and in the process worked very hard to protect front line services achieving something in the region of £57 million through genuine efficiencies. In the Council's budget set in February we set out the latest approach to savings with the 2020 North Yorkshire transformation programme. This programme first started in February 2014

and I am pleased to report that the delivery of this programme is proceeding to plan and we are making the necessary savings slightly in advance of our forecast timescale. I am aware that there has been difficult decisions needed to be made that have affected the public using services and also our staff. It is important that we have made a positive start and that the early savings made in some areas will be reflected in a positive outturn position to be reported at the Executives next quarterly monitoring meeting. Early savings help our position in relation to reserves which will be important given the uncertainties that lie ahead for all councils and the fact that local government is an unprotected area of government expenditure.

I am pleased that this Council has been brave enough to fundamentally look at how we deliver services, to look at opportunities to do things differently and more efficiently and thereby to protect more services than would have occurred through a traditional cuts programme. My Executive Member colleagues will make reference to a number of new service developments ranging from the stronger communities initiative, consultation on a new way of delivering libraries, a new children and families service looking to work differently with our most vulnerable young people, a new way of working with schools to enable school improvement, our ambitious plans for extra care and later in the year a launch of a new preventative service for older people. Through the 2020 North Yorkshire programme it is important that we continue to explain the service changes to the public and also to our staff and to work hard as a council to reduce the number of redundancies to a minimum that will be needed to be made as a consequence of the changes.

County Councillor John Weighell  
Leader of the Council