

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

22 JULY 2015

STATEMENT OF THE HIGHWAYS, ROAD SAFETY, ACCESS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE (INCL BROADBAND, MOBILE PHONE COVERAGE) AND PASSENGER TRANSPORT PORTFOLIO HOLDER COUNTY COUNCILLOR DON MACKENZIE

Highways

Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy

The Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy represents the County Council's commitment to our highways, and following approval by the Executive on 7 July is recommended for adoption by County Council on 22 July. The asset management strategy is a significant public document, which sets out how the County Council intends to deliver the Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Policy adopted by the County Council in May 2015.

The adoption of the Highways Asset Management Strategy is fully in line with the Department for Transport's Highway Maintenance Efficiency Programme and forms a key part of the highway efficiency self-assessment questionnaire a draft of which was published in June 2015. The outcome of this self-assessment, due in November 2015, will determine a portion of the County Council's highway maintenance capital allocation for 2016/17. Thereafter the self-assessment is completed annually, and this process will be a significant factor in the value of our capital allocation. Officers will be working hard to ensure that the County Council retains its maximum funding allocation which could include up to £5m in incentives bonus by 2018/19.

The strategy has been developed in line with the current Local Transport Plan 3.

Local Transport Plan 4

Members will know that the County Council has commenced preparation of the next statutory Local Transport Plan to be in place by 1 April 2016. It is intended that the new Plan, LTP4, will be submitted for approval in February next year. The first phase of public consultation asking for views on transport priorities ended on 30 June. Consideration of the responses and drafting of the LTP have begun. Reports have recently been considered by BES Executive Members and the TEE Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Further reports will be brought and there will be a second phase of public consultation in November seeking views on the draft Plan.

North Yorkshire Strategic Transport Prospectus

Members will be aware of the Government's initiative to bring the city regions of the North together to form a so-called Northern Powerhouse. Its aim will be to match the economic dominance of London and the South East. There are concerns that rural areas will be left out. Members may be reassured on this matter. The County Council is taking a strategic lead for North Yorkshire and also, where appropriate, for the wider York, North Yorkshire and East Riding LEP area. We have already been successful in ensuring that the newly-formed Transport for the North (TfN) recognise the importance of the rural areas to The Northern Powerhouse. As evidence of this, TfN recently requested that the County Council Bainbridge present to other transport authorities on how we are working to highlight the rural perspective.

A North Yorkshire Strategic Transport Prospectus is part of this process. It sets out both the economic importance of North Yorkshire in the context of The Northern Powerhouse and our

current transport priorities and aspirations. This document deals with strategic transport for the whole of the North of England, from Sheffield to Newcastle and on both sides of the Pennines.

Annual Evaluation of Highways Maintenance Contract

We have completed the 3rd annual evaluation of this contract, which was awarded to Ringway in April 2012 with a maximum term of 10 years. This was reduced to 9 years at the 2014 Annual Evaluation as a result of failure to meet a significant number of performance indicators.

The performance of the Contractor was assessed to be much better over the last year during which an additional £10m worth of capital-funded work was successfully delivered. The decision was taken to leave the contract period at 9 years, whilst the Contractor remains intent upon achieving performance levels in future that would win back the lost year.

Whitby Park and Ride

The Whitby Park and Ride scheme continues to be successful. Last year more than 131,000 passengers used the facility between April and October. It has got off to a very good start this season carrying more than 53,000 passengers up to the end of June. In spite of poor weather, this is significantly higher usage than last year.

The Introduction of parking controls and charges can be controversial and so it proved when the parking zone was first created in Whitby to encourage the use of the Park and Ride. Nevertheless, despite these initial concerns, especially on the part of local traders, the new arrangements seem to be settling down well. Productive engagement with local traders continues as we work together on minor changes to the parking zone. The traders themselves are also now being proactive and are using the P&R facility to promote their businesses.

Access to the Countryside

Public Rights of Way

The Planning Inspectorate has indicated that they will approve applications to modify the Definitive Map and Statement for claimed footpaths at Tadcaster and Sheriff Hutton. Public enquiries were held into both earlier this year. The Inspectorate has proposed modifications to the Orders, which are currently being advertised, but the process has established that, in each case, locally valued public rights of way are considered to exist and, on confirmation of the Orders, will be protected in law.

Passenger Transport

The bus subsidy consultation, which started on 15 May, continues until 14 August. This process includes several drop-in sessions, which have now all taken place and were well attended. It is clear that bus services are very important to our residents, and great care will be taken to ensure that the proposed level of bus subsidy of £1.5m from next April is used most effectively.

Broadband

I have recently received a very informative briefing from NYnet officers and attended my first NYnet Board meeting as an observer. North Yorkshire is a pioneer in the expansion of superfast broadband, and whilst we face challenges in extending the network to the most rural parts of the county, we do have a variety of developing technologies at our disposal to help us towards 100% provision.

DON MACKENZIE