

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**18 July 2018**

**STATEMENT OF THE ACCESS PORTFOLIO HOLDER COUNTY COUNCILLOR  
DON MACKENZIE (INCLUDING HIGHWAYS, ROAD AND RAIL TRANSPORT,  
BROADBAND, MOBILE TELEPHONY)**

**A59 at Kex Gill**

The A59 was closed on 30 May following the appearance of an 8m-long crack in the road surface of this trans-Pennine route. Investigations confirmed instability in the steeply-sloping ground underneath the road. At the time of submitting this statement for publication the road remains closed but, following temporary measures to stabilise the ground, it is expected to re-open on Sunday 8 July, with traffic signals in place for single-lane working.

Longer-term stabilising works will start shortly, which may involve further periods of closure.

Following the closure of this road for two months in January 2016 – on that occasion caused by slippages in the slope above the highway – the decision was taken to commence a diversion scheme, which would take the road away from its current alignment on a ledge on a steep slope at Kex Gill. This scheme has progressed very quickly. Extensive ground and environmental surveys have taken place in what is an area of significant importance for flora, fauna and peat deposits. A shortlist of four options for a diversionary route was the subject of a wide public consultation in September and October 2017, which also included three information events held in Harrogate, Skipton and in the village of Norwood, close to Kex Gill. There was overwhelming support for the scheme.

Last month the Council published its proposed realignment route and a further period of public consultation, again involving a public information event at Norwood, took place, ending last week. A report will come to the Executive at its meeting next Tuesday outlining the latest consultation responses, and asking for the preferred re-alignment to be adopted. If approved, a full business case for funding will be prepared and submitted to the Department for Transport, which has been kept fully informed throughout this fast-tracked scheme. Further discussions will also take place with landowners and nearby householders.

The County Council is aware that closing a major road affects many people: local businesses which rely upon passing trade, residents close to the closure points, and the travelling public who use this important trans-Pennine route. We have made every effort to keep everyone fully informed by all possible means of communication. I take this opportunity to thank highways officers for their excellent efforts since 30 May, and local member, Stan Lumley, who has done so much to help us engage with his residents during this time.

**Safer Roads Bid - £11.5m awarded**

North Yorkshire County Council has been awarded £11.5m from DfT's Safer Roads Fund to carry out safety improvements on four roads in our county. Those roads, identified by the Road Safety Foundation, are:

- A167 from Busby Stoop Roundabout (A167/A61) to Topcliffe
- A682 from the A65 at Long Preston to the Lancashire border
- A684 from the A1(M) at Leeming Bar to the Cumbria Border
- A6108 from Ripon to Scotch Corner

I have authorised the Corporate Director, Strategic Resources, to accept the grant funding.

The improvements on the A167 are already largely completed since we received pre-publication confirmation that these would be funded.

Works on the A682 are expected to be carried out during this financial year, whilst the programme for the A684 will be over three years up to 2021. The scheme for the A6108 will be delivered over a three year period from 2020.

There will be public consultations on any elements of each scheme which entail significant changes either to the roads themselves or to traffic management arrangements.

Whilst our county's roads are statistically very safe, this funding enables us to bring about further safety measures for our residents, businesses and visitors. Full details of all the bids are to be found here: <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/safer-roads-fund-bids>

### **A684 Bedale, Aiskew, Leeming Bar Bypass**

This £30m new road was opened in August 2016, and, in accordance with government requirements, an initial assessment of the success of the scheme in achieving its objectives has taken place. Using traffic data collected in September and October 2017, and comparing it with pre-construction figures, the following key points were concluded:

- Bypassed communities have experienced 47% reduction in traffic volumes
- Travel times and reliability have improved
- Noise levels down
- Air quality up
- Fewer accidents

A full report is available on the NYCC website.

### **Integrated Passenger Transport (IPT)**

This is the busiest time of the year for our IPT team following the school admissions process, when some 3700 mainstream pupil bookings are set up for the new school year, and special arrangements are made for more than 350 SEND pupils. The team will also deal with applications from 800 pupils who will pay for their transport to school using spare seats on buses. This year there is the additional challenge presented by the changes in transport for special needs pupils and the enhanced parental allowances on offer.

This work is done alongside Area Transport Reviews in Hambleton, Harrogate and Richmondshire involving hundreds of bus schedules. The team has again had to act quickly to replace transport provision over a single weekend following the failure of another bus operator.

Once again, I express my thanks to the IPT team for the vital work, which they do so well, quietly and efficiently behind the scenes.

### **£1m award to improve mobile phone coverage**

The Council has received an award of £1m from the North Yorkshire LEP to be used to improve mobile phone coverage in rural areas. There is a steady increase month by month in the number of communities with access to 4G. We are working with all four mobile phone operators to ensure coverage continues to improve. Part of this funding award will be used to provide five masts to boost telecoms infrastructure.

DON MACKENZIE