

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

20 FEBRUARY 2019

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

In October last year we received notice that the Department for Transport had allocated to the County Council an additional £13.1m of new money to be used during the current financial year for local highway maintenance.

At a recent meeting of the BES Corporate Director and BES Executive Members, approval was given to spend this extra money in a variety of ways, including on LED street lights, surface dressing chippings, recycling sites for tar-based materials, additional salt storage facilities, and general road repair and signals upgrades.

Accelerated LED Installations

Our programme to convert over 44,000 incandescent street lights to efficient LED technology is proceeding on schedule. It is expected that the work completed to-date will deliver annual savings in energy costs of £480,000 with an associated reduction in carbon emissions of 1600 tonnes.

This programme of work has been carried out efficiently and without inconvenience to the residents of North Yorkshire, and I extend my thanks to our street lighting team and to our contractor, Ringway.

Street Works Permit Scheme

This scheme for utility companies and their contractors commenced exactly a year ago. There is growing evidence that the need to apply and pay for a permit is effective in improving the way street works are carried out, leading to less disruption to the travelling public. Much more detailed information about roadworks is available now on our website by means of an interactive map and there has been a noticeable decline in complaints by members of the public since the permit scheme went live.

AppyParking, Harrogate

This App-based smart parking system, the first of its kind in the country, is now in use in Harrogate town centre streets and car parks. Over 2000 sensors installed on the road surface in on-street parking areas allow smart phone users to locate and pay for parking.

This pilot scheme is a partnership between NYCC and Harrogate Borough Council, VISA and AppyParking, and is part of a wider strategy to identify innovative ways to improve traffic flows in the town. This system can help users find a parking space more quickly, and offers a cash-free payment method for the convenience of visitors.

The trial will last for up to 18 months during which time the performance of the system will be carefully monitored. Data gathered via the sensors will provide valuable information which can be used to tailor parking provision to meet the needs of users whilst achieving traffic management benefits.

Harrogate Congestion Study

At its meeting on 15 January, the Executive agreed to support a wide public consultation on two packages of measures shortlisted as part of the Harrogate Congestion Study. Officers are working with consultants WSP to finalise details. The consultation is expected to start next month, and will run for 10 weeks.

Bus operator John Smith and Son Ltd

On the morning of 17 January Thirsk-based bus operator John Smith and Son Ltd informed our passenger transport team that it was terminating its 14 home-to-school and one local bus service contracts with immediate effect. Yet again, the passenger transport was faced with the challenge of setting up alternative arrangements so that no pupil would be without transport at the end of that school day. I pay tribute once more to the team's remarkable efforts as they rose to that challenge.

These emergency alternative arrangements will be in place until the end of this week. Longer term contracts will run from the beginning of the new half term. The local bus service 150 between Thirsk and Ripon has been picked up by the County Council's own fleet team with minor changes.

Scarborough Park & Ride

A consultation on options to reduce or withdraw the two Park & Ride services in Scarborough is currently underway and will last for a total of 12 weeks.

These services were introduced in February 2009 at sites on the A64 and A165 on the outskirts of town. The service is currently available seven days a week all year round with buses every 15 minutes. Demand has reduced by half in recent years and it is now appropriate to review the service provision to ensure that it offers good value for money.

English National Concessionary Travel Scheme – New Scheme

The council has been responsible for administering concessionary travel since April 2011. The current scheme, led by NYCC and delivered jointly with City of York Council, ends on 31 March. A new scheme will come into effect from 1 April and will continue to provide enhanced eligibility to include disabled persons and companion passes.

The updated scheme introduces revised reimbursement rates for bus operators. Our budget for concessionary travel in the current year is £7.9m.

Broadband and Mobile Telephony

Phase 3 of the SFNY project is well underway. Initially valued at £20.5m this latest phase of superfast broadband expansion will benefit 14,239 properties, most with top-of-the-range Fibre to the Premise technology. NYCC has secured additional funding for up to a further 11,000 connections, which will ensure that almost 98% of all business and domestic properties in the county will have access to a high quality service.

At the same time, mobile phone reception will be boosted further this year following the award by NYCC of a £1m contract to build four masts in areas with poor mobile phone signal. The work will be finished by early 2020 and many more residents and businesses will be able to benefit from 4G coverage.