

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

18 MAY 2016

**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 Capital Programme**

We have had some good news about funding for this year and for subsequent years, and I would like to give members details.

The Department for Transport confirmed our capital maintenance funding for the current financial year. This is now allocated in three parts as follows:

1. Needs-Based Grant (based on total length of highway)
2. Incentive Grant (based on a self-assessment questionnaire)
3. Challenge Fund Grant (subject to bids in excess of £5m).

Our allocations are:

1. £30.2m.
2. £1.65m on the basis of our assessment as Band 2 (There are Bands 1-3, with 3 as the best)) This is the maximum allocation since 2 and 3 are the same for 2016/17;
3. Challenge Fund Grant. We were unsuccessful in the first round but there will be an opportunity to bid next year for 2018/19 to 20/21.

Additionally, further funding has already been confirmed as follows:

1. £24m (2016/17 to 2020/21) from the Department for Transport via the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership. This was a successful bid to the Local Growth Fund for the maintenance of our rural network
2. £8m (2016/17 to 2020/21) NYCC corporate match funding to the LGF allocation
3. £4.3m Flood Recovery Fund
4. £1.64m for 2016/17 from the Pothole Action Fund for repairs and prevention

I welcome this additional funding and assure members that the extra investment will be put to very good use in maintaining the County's highways infrastructure.

A county-wide programme of surface dressing works has begun. This is a highly effective, preventative maintenance procedure which ensures that roads which are in good condition remain that way.

Flood Recovery

My last report provided an update on the recovery work being carried out by NYCC to help communities to recover from the December floods. Excellent progress continues to be made.

The provision of the temporary footbridge over the Wharfe in Tadcaster has been widely welcomed by local residents and businesses. In the meantime, our engineers and contractors have carried out repairs to secure the piers of the road bridge to prevent further damage. We have completed the detailed and painstaking survey work that was essential for the design of the repair scheme.

The construction of a cofferdam to allow the reconstruction of the listed bridge is set to begin. We are well on track to complete the scheme by the end of this year. We remain in close contact with the Environment Agency and Historic England, and have recently introduced enhanced communications on site in order to keep residents updated on progress.

We re-opened the A59 at Kex Gill on 27 February on schedule, and in spite of continued atrocious weather conditions at this remote location for weeks beforehand. I would like to record my thanks to, and my appreciation of, the superb efforts of our officers and contractors. This was a major incident which disrupted a key trans-Pennine route. It was vital to reopen the road as early as possible, which is exactly what we did. I also express my gratitude to local residents who bore the disruption to their daily lives with great patience and understanding.

We estimate that we suffered £5.3m worth of damage to the highway network, in respect of which we have received approximately £4.3m from Government, which is very welcome.

In addition, we continue to work with the districts and the LEP to ensure prompt payment of government support grants to affected homes and businesses. Payments have been made to 99% of households and 100% of businesses that have applied. Additional grants are also available to support households and businesses wishing to increase their flood resilience.

A684 Bedale Aiskew Leeming Bar Bypass

This major scheme continues to progress on time and budget. The roundabouts at either end of the bypass are now open to traffic. The link road between Leases Rd and J51 of the A1(M) was opened on the 10 February. The carriageway construction to the west of the motorway is 90% complete and east of the Leases Road is 60% complete.

A174 Sandsend Road Coastal Protection

This project involves the construction of 800m of concrete stepped sea defences, and supporting infrastructure such as public access stairs, stabilisation of the coastal slopes and infilling of Raithwaite Gill.

The works are expected to be complete at the beginning of next month on budget.

Special Events Attended

I would like to inform members about my attendance at two important community events since my last report.

The launch of the Upper Wharfedale Venturer, a community transport enterprise serving the Grassington, Kettlewell and Buckden areas in Craven, took place on Saturday 9 April. Shelagh Marshall and John Blackie attended with me, as did Richard Owens, who had retired a few days before, and other members of the IPT team. I have received a report on the first month's activities and the scheme, supported financially by NYCC, has enjoyed great success thanks to the leadership of the organisation, assisted by advice and support given to it particularly by Richard and his team, and by John Blackie.

On Friday 29 April I attended with Julian Smith MP and David Ireton the switching-on of a hyperfast broadband connection at a remote farm near Clapham. This local community, with help of Broadband for the Rural North (B4RN) and using volunteer labour to lay cables, now enjoys hyperfast broadband provided by Fibre to the Premise (FTTP).

Both of these events brought home to me how much can be achieved by volunteer groups who are prepared to work together to the benefit of their communities.

DON MACKENZIE