

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

24 JULY 2019

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

Harrogate Congestion Study

A 12-week public engagement on the Harrogate Congestion Study began on 15 April and closed on 8 July. Almost 15,000 responses have been received.

During the course of this process, officers from our Transport Planning team, supported by consultants WSP and by me as executive member, attended a series of public exhibitions, visited by over 1,000 residents. In addition, officers took part in meetings of Killinghall and Pannal & Burn Bridge Parish Councils and Knaresborough Town Council at which exhibition materials were presented and questions answered.

There will be now be a period of response analysis leading to a report to be brought to the Harrogate & Knaresborough and Skipton & Ripon Area Constituency Committees on 29 August and 6 September. A decision on the next steps to be taken to address congestion in Harrogate and Knaresborough will be made by the Executive later this year.

Highways Maintenance

A record highways budget for the current year will ensure that more than 380 miles of roads in our county will be surface-dressed, taking the total length of highways to receive such preventative treatment over the last six years to more than 2,000 miles, equivalent to a third of the total network.

Surface-dressing represents excellent value for money, at only a fifth of the cost of resurfacing. It maintains skid resistance, prevents water ingress and helps prevent deterioration of the road surface, keeping it in good condition for up to ten years.

Surface dressing is a key component of the way in which the county council manages its highways assets. Members are asked elsewhere on the agenda today to approve the adoption of our latest Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Policy and Strategy.

Highway authorities are now rated by the Department for Transport for the efficient way in which their assets are managed. The higher the rating, the greater the level of funding. North Yorkshire County Council is placed in the highest category, qualifying us for additional funding this year of £4.8m.

Our highways team has worked with our term contractor, Ringway, to develop a procedure to recycle coal tar-based materials, which are hazardous to health. Permits have been obtained from the Environment Agency under which materials removed from our roads during resurfacing work can be processed in mobile recycling plants and converted into a cold lay tarmac, for re-use on our highways. It is anticipated that 11,000 tonnes of recycled tarmac will be used during maintenance work this summer, helping to make our budgets go further and leading to environmental benefits for our residents.

Street Works Permit Scheme

Our Permit Scheme for works carried out on the public highway was launched on 7 February 2018. An annual report on the scheme's first year was presented to BES Executive Members

at a recent meeting with the BES Director. It showed that many of the intended benefits are being delivered. One notable improvement is the reduction in the duration of works being carried out by utility companies and their contractors. This has resulted in less congestion and fewer delays for the travelling public.

I remind members that details of all permits issued, including the utility involved and the nature and duration of the work being carried out, can be checked on the interactive roadworks map on the NYCC website (www.northyorks.gov.uk/roadworks-map)

Scarborough Park & Ride

Members of the Executive voted unanimously last month to approve the recommendation to close both Park & Ride sites in Scarborough henceforth from 1 November to 31 March. The number of users of the facilities during the off-season has declined sharply in the last seven years. Keeping the service open all year round no longer represents good value for money, nor is the environmental cost of empty buses plying the town's streets sustainable.

This course of action was favoured by most respondents to the 12-week period of public consultation which took place from the beginning of February until the end of April.

A64 and A66 upgrades

The county council supports improvements to the A64 between York and Scarborough, and has given its backing to the proposal to dual the road between the Hopgrove Roundabout and Barton Hill. This upgrade is key to the improvement in journey times and reliability, and has been recognised in the Strategic Transport Plan of Transport for the North.

The County Council continues to work with our MPs, our District and Borough Council colleagues and the business-led A64 Growth Partnership to make the case to the Department for Transport that an improved A64 is vital to the economy of the Yorkshire Coast and Ryedale.

Like the A64, the A66 is an east-west trunk road, which is managed by Highways England. It is an important route for freight traffic and also for tourism, giving access to the Yorkshire Dales, the Lake District and the North Pennines.

Highways England has just completed a consultation on designs for upgrading single-carriageway sections that would bring the whole route from Scotch Corner to Penrith up to dual carriageway standard. The consultation included a programme of events in North Yorkshire, which the BES Director and I attended in May.

Improving east-west connectivity is a key priority for this council, and upgrades to both of these roads would bring about significant enhancements to the local transport infrastructure

Broadband and Mobile Telephony

North Yorkshire County Council will shortly confirm the award of a contract worth £11.1m to create a local full fibre network based around up to 391 public buildings located throughout the county. This project, funded by a successful bid to the Government's Challenge Fund last year, is expected to encourage commercial investment in full fibre and boost our rapidly-improving digital economy.

DON MACKENZIE