

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**18 NOVEMBER 2020**

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

**Highways**

Preparations are now complete for winter. Salt barns have been restocked, salt bins and heaps across the highway network have been replenished, and our gritting teams have reviewed operational procedures.

Whilst our gritting routes remain unchanged for this year, our partner contractor, Ringway, has carried out route familiarisation and training in order to ensure that we continue to deliver our customary effective service. Our winter fleet has been serviced and additional equipment has been purchased, including new ploughs and salt spreaders for our 100+ farming contractors, who stand ready to support us during extreme weather conditions.

We have a number of new Duty Managers and Highway Officers, who have all received formal training, gaining knowledge working alongside experienced practitioners.

This year all our winter service operations will be delivered in accordance with Covid-19 guidance.

Work is well underway and traffic management is in place at **Junction 47** of the A1M where the A59 crosses over the motorway. This £8m scheme will create an additional lane on the A59, wider slip roads, and will introduce traffic light controls both on the roundabout and at the A168 T-junction nearby. Work is due to be completed in autumn next year.

A planning application for the re-alignment of the **A59 at Kex Gill** is due to be determined this month. The Department for Transport has confirmed that our bid for funding of the scheme will be submitted to its investment board shortly. If all goes to plan we should get a decision on conditional approval by the end of the year.

Work is progressing on the flood damaged section of the **A19 at Chapel Haddesley** near Selby. This important highway has been closed since February after flood waters from the River Aire undermined the embankment on which the road is constructed.

Balfour Beatty has been awarded the contract to carry out the work, which could start only last month after BT and Northern Gas Networks had completed repairs and diversions to their equipment, which was located under the highway. The completion date has now been confirmed as 25 June 2021, but every effort will be made to re-open the A19 before that date.

At the beginning of this month parts of the county have again been affected by flooding. Heavy, continuous rain fell in the west of the county leading to localised flooding in the Dales and in Craven, Hambleton and Harrogate. I thank our highways teams for their speedy efforts to close roads, signpost diversions and keep residents and drivers safe.

The County Council's highways maintenance delivery company, **NY Highways**, has now been registered and all necessary legal formalities have been completed. Managing

Director, Ross Bullerwell, has taken up his position, and the first Board Meeting took place in September. The company will commence operations on 1 June 2021.

### **Rail**

As indicated in my Statement to Council in July, I can now confirm that the objection by LNER to the County Council's £10m investment in track and signalling upgrades to the Harrogate Line between Knaresborough and York has been removed. This scheme is expected to be completed by the end of next month. The improved infrastructure will make it possible for the train operator to run two journeys between York and Harrogate every hour in each direction (double the current capacity). The full additional frequency may now be introduced in December 2021, six months later than planned, because Northern Rail has been unable to train sufficient drivers owing to Covid-19 restrictions in the cabs.

### **Bus Services**

Bus services across the county have been restored to pre-pandemic timetables but passenger numbers remain very low. The County Council continues to pay concessionary fares re-imburement payments at pre-Covid levels in an effort to support bus operators and to keep them financially viable.

Our **home to school transport services** re-started at the beginning of the new school year in September. Grants totalling more than £700k have been received from the Department for Transport to help us deal with social distancing arrangements on the vehicles.

### **Emergency Active Travel Fund bid**

The County Council submitted a Tranche-2 bid to the Government's EATF for funding of five cycling schemes: two in Harrogate, and one each in Helmsley, Knaresborough and Whitby. We await a response to our proposals.

### **Broadband and Fibre**

An announcement of the award of Phase 4 of our Superfast North Yorkshire project will be made shortly. The contract is worth £12.5m and is likely to increase the coverage of superfast-quality broadband up to 97% of all domestic and business premises throughout the county. Under Phases 1, 2 and 3, over 190,000 properties have been connected up, with most of the recent connections using fibre-to-the-property technology, providing subscribers with broadband speeds of up to 330mbps.

The County Council's £15.1m Local Full Fibre Networks project is almost complete. Under this scheme, 170km of gigabit fibre have been installed under roads and footpaths in towns and villages throughout the county. Those locations include: Brompton, Catterick Garrison, Easingwold, Eastfield, Filey, Great Ayton, Harrogate, Killinghall, Knaresborough, Leyburn, Malton, Northallerton, Norton, Pannal, Pickering, Richmond, Ripon, Scarborough, Selby, Settle, Skipton, Stokesley, Tadcaster, Thirsk, Thornton-le-Dale, Thorpe Willoughby and Whitby.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR DON MACKENZIE