

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

20 JULY 2022

STATEMENT OF EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION COUNTY COUNCILLOR KEANE DUNCAN

This is my first statement as Executive Member. It outlines a number of key achievements and demonstrates the scale of our ambition for highways and transport as we look forward to the new North Yorkshire Council.

The nature of the portfolio, with its many competing demands, means it will be impossible to please everyone all of the time. But my hope is that being visible across all parts of North Yorkshire and accessible to councillors of all political groups will help promote progress. Your support, local intelligence and suggestions over coming months will be very welcome.

I thank those councillors who have already welcomed me to their divisions as part of my 'Highways Tour' of North Yorkshire. These visits have been invaluable. My pledge is to visit every division across the county, with further visits scheduled for the coming weeks.

Positive news

Electric vehicle charging points

We are hoping to install 70 new charging points in rural areas across the county via a £2m bid to the government's pilot Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Fund. We expect a decision later this summer.

Rail station improvements

Our ambitious £39.9m bid to improve access and facilities at three of North Yorkshire's stations – Thirsk, Seamer and Scarborough – has been submitted to the government's Levelling Up Fund. A decision is expected in Autumn 2022. Meanwhile, we are making progress to deliver the three Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) projects for Harrogate, Skipton and Selby stations. Our aim is to commence work in 2023. We have launched a third round of consultation on the Harrogate Station Gateway, seeking public feedback on the traffic elements of the scheme.

Kex Gill

Positive progress has been made towards delivering one of the council's most challenging ever road projects – a scheme costing over £60m to re-route the A59. A number of legal steps have been complete in recent months and we aim to submit a Full Business Case to the Department for Transport this month. The aim is to commence works in February 2023, with completion expected in mid-2025.

Action on potholes

NY Highways is trialling new techniques and equipment to improve our roads. The first innovation is a pothole repair technique called Spray Injection Patching. With the initial trial delivering high-quality and value for money repairs, we have commenced a 20-week programme to further test its performance. The second innovation is the Pothole Pro, which is able to undertake an automated 'cut, crop and clean' repair. We used the machine for a week in June and we are now assessing the trial's success. Meanwhile, the council has almost completed its surface dressing programme across 200 miles of the network.

Key issues

Bus services

We are facing up to significant pressures facing several of North Yorkshire's commercial routes. The end of the Commercial Bus Services Support Grant provided by central government in October presents a potential cliff-edge in terms of the future profitability of routes our residents rely upon. We are currently performing a Network Review to identify at-risk services. This information will be key in allowing me to assess potential support the council can provide to keep as many of our vital services running as possible. I pledge to keep members informed through this process.

Highway maintenance

Our settlement for highway maintenance from the Department for Transport is £40m for this financial year and will remain fixed at that amount for 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years. This represents a real terms cut. I am currently identifying options to ensure we're able to protect the level of service we deliver, upholding and potentially improving highway condition across North Yorkshire's vast network.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR KEANE DUNCAN