

## NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

22 FEBRUARY 2023

### STATEMENT OF EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

#### **Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Fund**

Building on our success in securing £2m of funding from the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Fund pilot scheme to deliver 70 charging points, we are now preparing to bid for funds from the government's full £400m LEVI fund expected to launch imminently.

This funding opportunity comes as we agree our Electric Vehicles Charging Infrastructure Strategy. This aims to direct where charge points should be located and how we can overcome barriers to delivery in our rural county. Public consultation on our draft strategy commenced in November 2022 and the responses are being analysed before the draft is finalised and presented to the Executive in April 2023.

#### **A59 Kex Gill**

We are almost ready to begin construction work to realign Kex Gill, which is amongst the council's biggest ever infrastructure projects. The council has awarded preferred bidder status to John Sisk & Son (Holdings) Ltd, a family-owned international civil engineering and construction contractor with a strong track record. We are in the final stages of completing land acquisition processes ahead of a decision on our full business case which was submitted to the Department for Transport in August. A decision is expected very soon to coincide with a planned start on site.

#### **Transforming Cities Fund – Harrogate, Selby and Skipton**

We continue to make progress on work to improve access to three of North Yorkshire's rail stations, utilising up to £38.3m of funding from the government's Transforming Cities Fund:

- In Harrogate, we have now concluded our third public consultation and the results published in January. This showed encouraging levels of support. Meanwhile, planning applications relating to the scheme have been submitted and we will soon consult on the scheme's Traffic Regulation Orders before the Area Constituency Committee will be asked for its views on whether the scheme should progress
- In Skipton, a planning application for the railway car park has been submitted, however, further details are being submitted to the Environment Agency and Yorkshire Water before their objections can be lifted and application determined. We continue to work with Network Rail, Northern and the Canal and River Trust on design finalisation
- Planning permission for the Selby scheme was granted in September. We are currently developing a construction plan for the project, working closely with Network Rail and TransPennine Express given key parts of the scheme involve railway land, including new lifts as part of the Access for All scheme. We are preparing to commence demolition of the Selby Railway Sports & Social Club on Station Road and James William House on Cowie Drive, together with utility diversions related to the new Bawtry Road underpass.

Inflationary impacts are being considered on all three projects. Should a need to reduce costs arise we will prioritise quality of materials and de-scope elements as needed. Once designs are finalised, full business cases will be prepared and submitted to West Yorkshire Combined Authority for approval. Construction is expected to start in late 2023.

### **Local Transport Plan (LTP)**

We have embarked upon devising a new Local Transport Plan (LTP). This is a landmark document being produced jointly with City of York Council that will guide our future approach to all forms of transport – road, bus, rail, walking and cycling. It will allow us to bid for funding to deliver the infrastructure we need to better connect residents, unlock economic growth and promote sustainability.

The input of councillors, key stakeholders and the public will be critical as we draw up our new LTP, which replaces the one in place since 2016. A lot has changed in that time: electric vehicles use has grown significantly, the Covid-19 pandemic has changed how people live, work and travel, and there have been advances in technology. We expect to finalise the new LTP in advance of the new Mayoral Combined Authority being formed.

### **Levelling Up Fund (LUF) – Thirsk, Seamer, Scarborough and Malton stations**

Levelling Up Fund (LUF) bids to improve Thirsk, Seamer, Scarborough and Malton rail stations were unfortunately unsuccessful. While this is disappointing news, we remain undeterred in our efforts to deliver these improvements, which collectively have a value of almost £60m. Our plans are ready to go and we are seeking alternative funding, such as from the next LUF round or from devolution investment funds.

### **20mph review**

A review of our approach to 20mph limits and zones is under way. This review is examining factors such as road safety, environment, value for money and enforcement. It is also looking at lessons from other local authorities and assessing how our own policy is working a year since its adoption. Given the critical importance of road safety, it is vitally important that proper process is followed and the review is able to make conclusions built on evidence and public feedback. All county councillors have been invited to provide their input and the review is expected to conclude by May.

### **Winter**

This winter has been relatively mild to date except for a period of very challenging conditions on the coast prior to Christmas. During this period the teams worked tirelessly to keep roads as clear as possible and keep the public moving. We are very proud of the winter service we deliver, which is one of the most comprehensive in the country. We treat 52% or 4,800km of the highway network – a distance equivalent to Northallerton to Belgrade. We remain vigilant over upcoming weeks but hope we have seen the worst of this winter.

### **Bus services**

North Yorkshire's bus network remains in a fragile position, with lower passenger numbers and increased costs continuing to affect the profitability of several services. However, there are positive signs that the council's close cooperation with operators will allow us to avoid the feared March 'cliff edge' when post-Covid government funding is expected to end.

Bus services in the Selby and Scarborough areas have recently been re-procured with very few changes. These have been awarded for an initial period of up to two years using a mixture of council funds and government grants. Our focus now shifts to other parts of the county. It is our hope that we can find funds to protect services here too until at least 2024.

While our actions may minimise the loss of services right now, uncertainties remain and this funding lifeline is unlikely to be available in perpetuity. Passengers remain key to the long-term viability of services and we must use the next two years to work with operators through our Enhanced Partnership to invest in the marketing, ticketing and infrastructure needed to make buses an attractive transport option. It is only by doing this that we will have a sustainable network of services, responsive to passenger needs and free from the uncertainty that comes with reliance on taxpayer funding.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR KEANE DUNCAN