

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

15 NOVEMBER 2023

STATEMENT OF EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

A59 Kex Gill

Delivery of the £68.8m scheme to divert the A59 continues. Key achievements on site include the specialist dismantling and reconstruction of over 2km of dry stone walling, comprising eight different styles of traditional techniques, and the building of a 3.5km temporary haul road to facilitate site access. At the time of writing this update, essential highway maintenance works are also being carried out on the existing A59 ahead of the winter season as part of our Highways Capital Programme.

Transforming Cities Fund – Harrogate, Selby and Skipton

We continue to make progress on work on transformative schemes to improve access to three of North Yorkshire's rail stations:

- In Harrogate, a cross-party effort is under way to produce a revised plan following a legal challenge that resulted in the Executive's decision to submit the final business case being rescinded. I feel strongly we should not give up on efforts on secure £11m of investment. Time is rapidly running out, but my sincere hope is that we can agree a deliverable plan. I thank colleagues for their positive input so far.
- Planning permission for the Selby scheme was granted in September. We are working closely with Network Rail and TransPennine Express to deliver key parts of the scheme involving 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 in the New Year. Full information will be provided well in advance of any work starting on site.
- In Skipton, a planning application for the railway car park has been submitted with determination expected in November. We continue to work with Network Rail, Northern and the Canal and River Trust on the scheme's final design.

An update report will be brought to the Executive later this month. Once designs for all three schemes are finalised, full business cases will be prepared and submitted to the West Yorkshire Combined Authority for final approval.

Electric Vehicle Charging

North Yorkshire Council is leading the way for rural areas with its roll out of electric vehicle charging infrastructure. We have already received £3.27m funding through two Office for Zero Emissions Vehicles grants to deliver 150 Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCPs) and associated renewable technology alongside 70 of those chargers. We have also bid for a further £4.88m from the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Capital Fund, which was offered as an indicative allocation rather than a competition. This should enable delivery of around 1,300 EVCPs. Subject to approval, this would see us deliver on our target four years ahead of schedule. NYC also received £494,000 from the LEVI Capability Fund to cover resourcing of this project. We hope to procure a charging point operator very soon to start delivery of EVCPs early in the next financial year.

Winter Service

We are gearing up for winter once again. Gritters have undergone their summer services and checks, salt barns have been replenished and the routine top-ups of salt/grit bins and heaps is almost complete. Rotas have been compiled for duty managers and officers in both NY Highways and North Yorkshire Council. NY Highways has also drafted in new and returning winter casual staff to supplement permanent employees to ensure sufficient drivers

to treat our network when conditions dictate. The first treatments of this current season were undertaken during the weekend of Friday 13 – Monday 16 October. Overall, our fleet, personnel and salt stocks are all in place to face whatever winter throws our way. And as always, we will be supported by our band of over 100 farming contractors who so-ably assist us during more severe weather.

Local Transport Plan

Almost 5,000 responses were received to the first round of consultation on a new Local Transport Plan for York & North Yorkshire. This ran from May to July and attracted much greater than expected interest. The council continues to engage with key stakeholders and is holding informal Area Constituency Committee (ACC) meetings so all elected members can provide input to this important plan.

Buses

I am pleased to report positive news for North Yorkshire's bus services. A year ago, I told council that up to a third of our network was at risk due to a downturn in passenger demand and higher operating costs. I am pleased to report today that as a result of our efforts not a single service has ceased as a result of becoming commercially unviable, although there have been timetable and route changes/amalgamations.

This is a phenomenal achievement, that puts us in the very best position to expand services in the future. This reversal of fortunes has been possible due to a combination of central government grants, the £2 fare cap, our close cooperation with operators and the dedication of our passenger transport team.

In further positive news, we recently accepted £2.93m from the Department for Transport's Bus Service Improvement Plan Plus (BSIP+) fund. This will allow us to support bus services throughout 2023/24 and 2024/25. We have also been informed we will receive an additional £3.5m from the Government's £36bn Network North plan. We expect this to support delivery of our BSIP via our Enhanced Partnership with operators.

It has also just been announced that the national £2 fare cap initiative has been extended to December 2024. This will promote bus use at the same time as supporting passengers with the cost of living.

COUNCILLOR KEANE DUNCAN