

### Statement made by Tony Serjeant to the 14th December meeting of the Skipton and Ripon ACC:

*The petition has been going a few months and has attracted a few hundred signatories but probably less than the 500 that would trigger an automatic debate by the councillors. Therefore, I will confine myself at the 14<sup>th</sup> December meeting to asking the following questions:*

- 1. In the light of publicity that indicates that northern councils will be given increased funding for public transport priorities due to the cancellation of the northern leg of HS2, will the Council confirm that it is going to seek funding to improve rural bus services in North Yorkshire?*
- 2. If it is the case that the authority will seek new funding for public transport, how much will it bid for and upon what will the money be spent?*
- 3. Will the area committee undertake to explore what it can do to restore the No 72 bus service so that it runs as least as many daily buses between Skipton, Grassington and intervening villages as it did prior to cuts to the timetable that came into force in May 2023?*

### Officer response to the above statement, read out at the 14<sup>th</sup> December Skipton and Ripon ACC:

Q1 & 2:

*The government has published indicative funding allocations for 2024/25 only from the redirected HS2 budget and North Yorkshire Council has been given an indicative allocation of £3.5M. The Department for Transport (DfT) expects us to use the funding to maintain existing bus service levels and also on other measures to improve public transport consistent with our published Bus Service Improvement Plan. These have to be agreed through the statutory Enhanced Partnership that each council has in place with bus operators and passenger representatives after which DfT will confirm the final allocation to be made by the end of the financial year. Our Bus Service Improvement Plan includes measures to maintain and improve bus services in rural areas but with only one year of funding currently being made available, and at very short notice, it will be difficult to introduce wholly new bus services and develop them to the point of longer term sustainability in a single year. This is something we, and other councils, have raised with DfT as longer term funding is needed to deliver the improvements to public transport we want to see.*

Q3:

*Regarding Service 72, the changes to the timetable earlier this year were in reaction to commercial bus service withdrawals across the Skipton network and part of a plan to ensure that services could be retained on all routes, albeit at a lower frequency. The contract for Service 72 is currently out to tender and we have included options to increase the service frequency. Given the additional funding likely to be available next year we would hope to be able to introduce a more frequent timetable from Easter 2024.*