



Councillor Denise Rollo
Executive Member for Sustainable, Resilient and Connected Places
Cumberland Council
Cumbria House
117 Botchergate
Carlisle
CA1 1RD

15th February 2024

Dear Denise,

I am sure you agree that it is welcome news that Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness Councils are set to receive an additional £287m between them over the next ten years for highways improvements, from the reallocation of HS2 funding.

I know that you have previously publicly stated your preference that HS2 had been built, though this would have brought little benefit to my constituents or to residents of Cumberland as a whole. However, I am delighted that the Government is instead spending the considerable cost of HS2 across the areas where HS2 funding would have been spent – on alternative infrastructure and transport improvements. This includes the huge upgrade package to the Cumbrian Coast Railway Line for which I have campaigned since my election.

The Government is providing £8.3 billion of extra roads resurfacing funding for English local highway authorities between 2023/24 to 2033/34, as part of the Network North plan to improve journeys for all and to provide long-term certainty to local authorities.

In keeping with the Prime Minister's commitment, all monies previously allocated for the North will be allocated in the North; all monies previously allocated to the Midlands will still be allocated there; and monies from savings at Euston will be spent across England. The funding is broken down as follows:

- £3.3 billion for the North of England
- £2.2 billion for the Midlands
- £2.8 billion for East, South East (including London) and South West England.

I don't need to point out to you the significant capital investment this Government is making across Cumberland, resulting in higher capital budgets than in any of your predecessor councils, than at any point in time.

This Government is committed to levelling up our communities.

This latest highways improvement funding is in addition to local transport funding from the last Spending Review and additional to what local transport authorities were expecting in future. Allocated across the next 11 years, it will represent a more than two-thirds increase in DfT support for local roads. Fifteen percent of the funds will be allocated at a later date to allow a degree of flexibility over how best to support highway maintenance initiatives across England.

£150 million of the new funding is being made available in each of the financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25, with the lion's share to follow over the remainder of the 11-year period. This provides



time for local authorities, and their supply chains, to ramp up to deliver an increase in funding of this significance.

This reallocation results in an additional funding boost of over £130m for Cumberland Council over the next ten years, with nearly £2m in each of the financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25. Of course, this all comes on the back of the additional roads funding announced at Spring Budget 2023 and the significant increases we've seen in pothole funding since its introduction in 2015.

As the Executive Member for Sustainable, Resilient and Connected Places, I am sure you are as keen as I am to ensure that Cumberland reaps the full benefits of this significant funding uplift. Naturally, I am keen to ensure that Cumberland is putting this money to the best possible use by complying with the new reporting requirements that the Government has set out below.

- Publish by 15 March 2024 a summary of the additional resurfacing work they will deliver with the new funding over the next 2 years;
- Thereafter quarterly reports, with the first by the end of June 2024, summarising the additional work they have done and listing the roads that they have resurfaced; and
- Later in 2024/25 a long-term plan for their use of the full 11-year funding and the transformation it will deliver.

To date, Cumberland's track record of meeting transparency requirements has not been great. I look forward to your acknowledgement of the above requirements, and your confirmation that you will publish the information requested without delay, and in any case in advance of the DfT deadlines.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if I can be of any assistance.

Yours sincerely

Mark Jenkinson MP

cc: Darren Crossley, Director of Place, Sustainable Growth and Transport